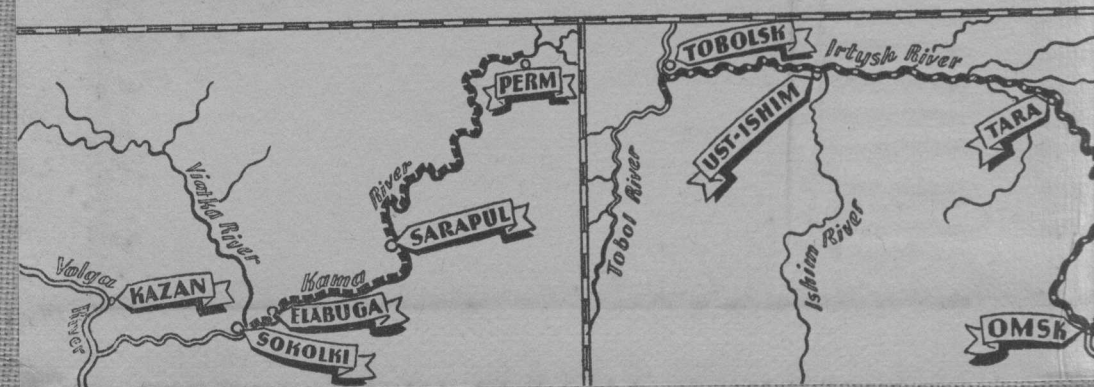
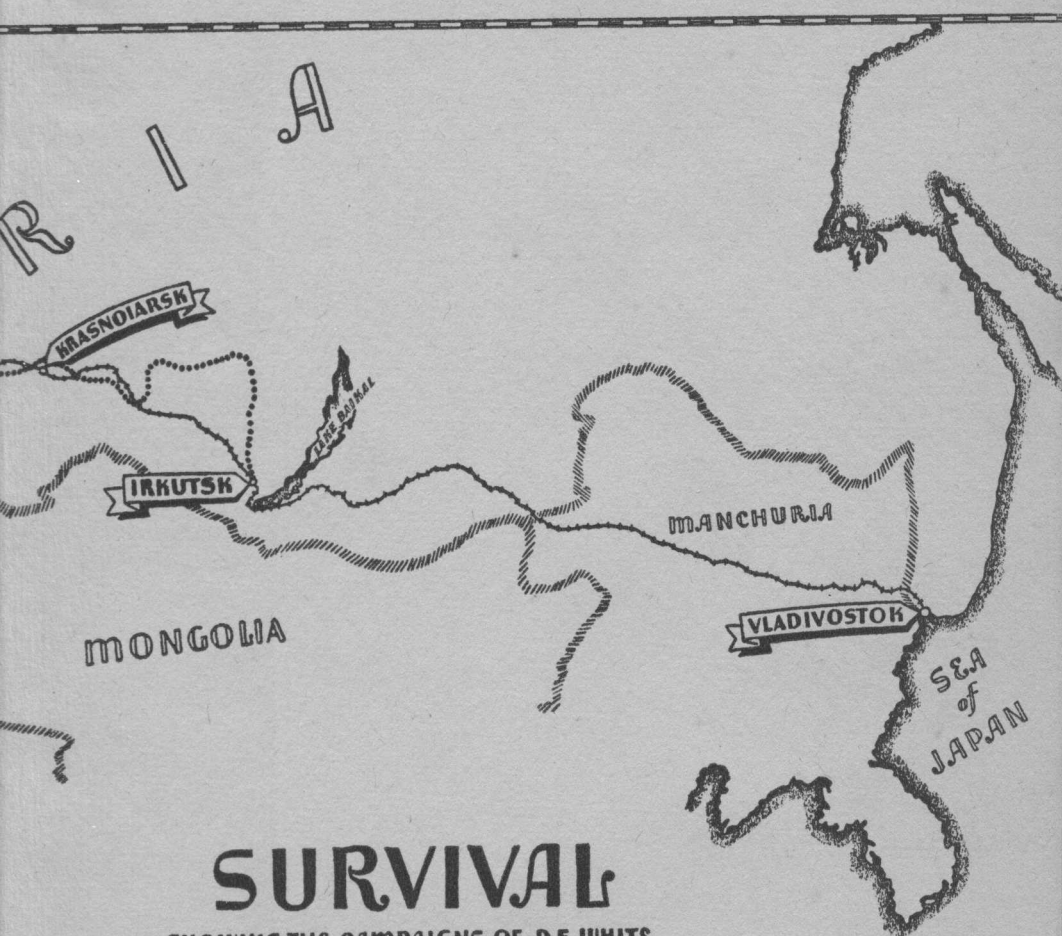
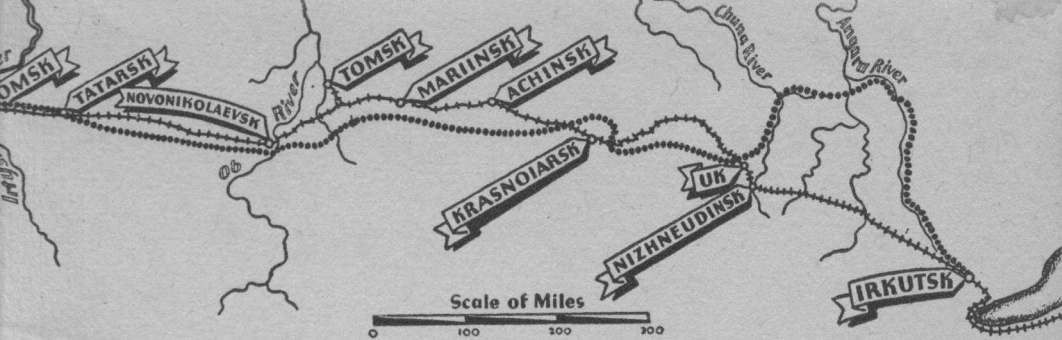






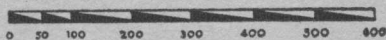
SURVIVAL

SHOWING THE CAMPAIGNS OF D.F. WHITE

K&H

- TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILROAD
- ~~~~~ KAMA FLOTILLA ROUTE
- ~~~~~ IRTYSH FLOTILLA ROUTE
- ROUTE OF THE NAVAL REGIMENT

SCALE



SURVIVAL

THROUGH

WAR AND REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA

By

D. Fedotoff White



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Drawing by John H. Geiszel

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Courtesy of Underwood & Underwood

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Courtesy of Underwood & Underwood

PART I

*Whenever this narrative involves persons
still residing in Soviet Russia or those whose
relatives are living there, names and situations
have been changed to make identification impossible.*

FIRST SEA TRAGEDY

WHEN I was five years old, we spent the summer at Reval. Now Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, it was then one of the Russian seaports on the Baltic, and a station of the Imperial Russian Navy. We were living in a small cottage lost in a vast garden on the fringe of the great Ekaterinenthal park. The solemn beauty of the old chestnuts in bloom, the exquisite old-worldliness of the small baroque palace, the murmur of the shallow, greenish-gray sea on the pebbly beach, are still among the most fragrant memories of my childhood. Reval was such a contrast to the stark drabness of Kronstadt, the city of my birth.

My father was a naval officer and served as Chief Gunnery Officer on board the coastal-defense ironclad *Pervenets*. The ship was attached to the Gunnery Training School Squadron. Every week the old *Pervenets* blazed away at targets, while the clumsy hands of the recruits, more used to handling ploughshares than guns, were trained in the art of ballistics.

Father was a devoted enthusiast of gunnery, a born instructor and leader of men. He put his whole soul into work that would seem humdrum and monotonous to most people, and was as proud of the gunnery records of his rookies as a football coach of his team's prowess.

Sundays and holidays were days of family reunion. We went out for long rambles in the park, or by trolley to the old part of the city, where we visited the old Cathedral, the Naval Station or the Castle of the Domberg. On these occasions, Father talked to me as to a grown-up person, pouring out his ardent soul of a seaman and devoted lover of Russia. He spoke of the famous Scotsman, Admiral Greig, who served the Russian Empire so well, pointing out the captured Swedish battle flags over the Admiral's tomb at St. Olai's; took me to see the bullets imbedded in the thick walls of the castle since the days of the siege of Reval by Ivan the Dread of Russia. I could

see the knights in armor riding down the narrow lane from the Domberg in their forays on Russian settlements; and the great battle in the roadstead of Reval between the fleets of Sweden and Russia was fought all over again. Numerous episodes of local history made the old city a fascinating place for me. My taste for history probably dates from these Sundays, when the narrow medieval streets and the red-gabled houses of the Marktplatz gave up their secrets at my father's magic touch.

My favorite walk, however, was to the Naval Station. We fished for sea perch in the basins; I talked at length to the convalescent sailors, sunning themselves on benches near the hospital, and we never failed to call on the old Quartermaster Fedulin, who was a great hand at building models of the sailing ships of the navy and thoroughly despised the new-fangled ironclads. I could sit for hours in rapt admiration of Fedulin's work while he hollowed out sawed-off logs to be used for hulls of his models, or pieced together the slender, well-polished masts, rigging his ships with tarred twine, the smell of which still lingers in my nostrils.

Fedulin had served under my father in the armed clipper *Kreiser*, one of the fleetest sailing ships of the Russian navy in the eighties. He delighted in telling me the incidents of the long cruises in the Pacific and the Arctic oceans, of the months spent in the survey of the coast of Korea.

"There's a cape up there named for His Honor, your dad," he would never omit to tell me, "and a mountain named St. Nicholas for his patron saint."

Father had promised to buy me a model from Fedulin, if I succeeded during the summer in mastering the intricacies of the alphabet. So, as I sat in the nursery, piecing together my blocks with the letters on them, I often day-dreamed of white sails billowing in the wind, smelled the tar of the rigging and saw the slender hull of the beautiful corvette, of which Fedulin would one day make me a model.

Among the great events of my life were the much-prized visits to the *Pervenets* on special holidays, when the Wardroom would give a luncheon to the wives of the officers. Father would smuggle me on board and leave me in his tiny room, almost entirely filled by a brown leather settee and a small wardrobe. I came to know some of the officers of the *Pervenets* who would drop in after lunch and take me around the ship. I confess I had but a lukewarm interest in the engines and boilers. The guns, on the other hand, fascinated me. They seemed to be endowed with a life of their own, creatures with

tremendous power, talking in a throaty and terrifying voice that rivaled the thunder of the storm clouds. Their thick steel bodies on the complicated carriages looked as if ever ready to spring forward and spew forth their bolts.

My greatest ambition was to be permitted to fire a gun. But all my efforts to coax the Second Gunnery Officer into letting me fire one of the small saluting guns were of no avail. He would just laugh and say that I was only a small boy and that guns were grown-up people's playthings.

My chance came in an entirely unexpected way. The other cottage in our garden was occupied by the family of Lieutenant Kirilov, the Navigation Officer of the armored gunboat *Rusalka*. Kirilov had been a close friend of my father's since the days when they were together at the Naval College. We saw a great deal of him and his family, as well as of his chum Adler, a red-bearded fierce-looking Baltic German and also a Navigation Officer on one of the ships of the Reval Squadron.

On the Empress' nameday, Kirilov invited my parents to lunch on board the *Rusalka*, and I was also permitted to go. It was a very exciting moment. I had never as yet visited any other ship than the *Pervenets*, but knew by sight all the ships of the Squadron. The low, one-masted *Rusalka* was quite unlike the chubby, high-hulled three-masted *Pervenets*, and I was keen to compare her battery with that of the other ship.

Early in the morning of the great day, Father took me to the bathing pier protruding far into the bay on its high wooden piles. The water at Reval even at the height of summer is quite cold, particularly when southeastern winds prevail. Sea-bathing at the time had no attraction for me whatsoever. I was a rather anæmic, delicate boy and very sensitive to cold. Father undressed in the small cubicle on the pier and told me to do the same. I reluctantly followed his example, taking an uncommonly long time over my buttons and shoe laces. When we came out on the float, my courage gave out altogether and I roundly declared the water was too cold and I didn't want to go in. Father first tried to coax me to jump into the water, told me the story of the brave Spartan boy with the fox, informed me that only sissies and cry-babies were afraid of cold water, but that men, like him and me, thrived on it. I did not argue, but felt that I simply was not up to the high standard set by the Spartans and that the chilly brine was no place for me, cry-baby or not. Here my father's patience gave out. He grabbed me in his arms and jumped

into the sea. I had to swim, willy-nilly. So I swam, giving out an anguished howl from time to time.

As we dressed after the swim, Father told me that he would never take me on board any ship if I ever again behaved in such a disgraceful manner. Silently I nursed my grief and my wounded self-esteem. However, the bright sunshine, the large gathering of officers' families at the landing-stage, the gay colored parasols, bright summer dresses and huge beflowered hats of the ladies, the white uniforms, gold-laced epaulettes, and short dirks of the officers soon made me forget my ducking. There were a few children accompanying their parents, and I looked with contempt on any boy dressed in knickers and blouse. I wore a real naval outfit, a white shirt of Iaroslavl linen with a wide blue collar, a beribboned hat with *Pervenets* in gold letters, and carried a small quartermaster's whistle on a silver chain.

The twelve-oared barge of the *Rusalka* was already waiting. It was a beautiful boat, built along the low, rakish lines of the fast barges of the old Russian navy. The white enamel paint of its sides gaily reflected the swift, sunny ripples of the water. The brightly colored ship's badges in gilded frames, protruding in the bows like the goggly eyes of a tropical fish, were a source of delight to me. I liked them much better than those of the *Pervenets*' barges. The brawny young sailors in blue-collared shirts open at their bronzed necks were sitting on the thwarts, waiting for the quartermaster's whistle to seize the oars.

First the ladies were handed into the boat and seated in the cockpit amid coquettish smiles and demure glances at their escorts. I tried to slip into the seat behind the transom board, but Father told me that this was against Naval Regulations and that a big boy like me ought to know better. So I had to be content with a seat between Mrs. Kirilov and my mother. When we were all seated the senior officer gave the signal to shove off. At the blast of the quartermaster's whistle the bow oarsman pushed the prow far away from the float, ten long oars flashed in the sun and were set down in the oarlocks with the precision of muskets presented on parade.

The barge spread its oars like a great seagull about to rise from the water, and under the impulse of the first powerful stroke the boat bounded forward like a spirited thoroughbred, while the quartermaster kept time with guttural grunts. ". . . At! . . . At! . . . At!"

We were soon beyond the gates of the small harbor and speeding out toward the *Rusalka*. The fast movement of the barge was like a heady wine to me. I watched the free and effortless way in which the

sailors handled their oars, their serious young faces as they bent forward, throwing the blades far behind them, and drew back for the long stroke in vogue in those days. My whole ambition was to be a sailor, to wallop the waves with a big oar, to be sunburnt, strong, and carefree.

We reached the companion ladder of the *Rusalka* a few minutes before noon. The saluting battery was preparing a peaceful cannonade with blank cartridges in honor of the beautiful Princess Dagmar of Denmark, who was now Empress Marie of Russia. Kirilov introduced me to the Gunnery Officer of the *Rusalka*, and to my delight I was permitted to remain in the saluting battery, having been furnished with cotton wool to stop my ears. As the small guns crashed their loud pæan to the Empress of All the Russias, enveloping the small ship in a cloud of white smoke, I imagined myself a great naval chief, proudly pacing the quarter-deck of a ship of the line engaged in mortal combat with a Turkish fleet. The acrid smell of powder smoke acted as a powerful stimulant to my imagination, while I watched the gun crews performing their work with the measured, springy steps of the Imperial Corps de Ballet.

The Gunnery Officer chuckled approvingly: "We'll make a gunner of you yet, Dimitrii!"

I immediately took advantage of this opening and begged him to let me fire one of the saluting guns. The officer smiled and said no, but ordered a petty officer to put a priming fuse into the breech of the gun next to those used in saluting. Upon receiving permission, I ran on tiptoe to the gun and pulled the discharge cord with all my might, letting loose a puny explosion hardly audible in the crash of the other guns. This performance, however, gave me a great deal of satisfaction. What of it, if the shot was not as loud as the others? This was a different gun and apparently had its own way of doing things.

That afternoon, so glorious in every other respect, was marred by a fight with another boy, also a guest on board the *Rusalka*, who doubted the veracity of my claim to having fired a big gun during the salute. I was sadly worsed in the battle that ensued.

A few weeks later the placid course of our life in the Germano-Estonian rusticity of Ekaterinenthal was interrupted by two events. Father received a telegram from the great Admiral Stepan Makarov, inviting him to come to St. Petersburg to collaborate on some experiments he was conducting at the Naval Practice Range with armor-piercing shell-caps. And the Kirilovs were breaking up their summer

home, since the *Rusalka* was ordered to sail to Kronstadt via Helsingfors and there strike her pennant, as her commission had expired.

Kirilov and some of the other officers of the *Rusalka* were very eager to have Father sail with them to Kronstadt en route to St. Petersburg.

"Why not see Helsingfors again? It's a nice little town and you have friends there whom you've sadly neglected all these years. We're going to have a corking good time and you'll be at the Admiralty only one day later than by train direct from here."

My father was inclined to accept the invitation when another telegram arrived from Admiral Makarov, urging him to expedite the trip. He decided to go by train that same night, but before he left we all went to the farewell party given by the officers of the *Rusalka* to their more intimate friends in Reval. After the dinner, my mother and I joined Kirilov and my father in an evening sail over the bay in the barge of the *Rusalka*. It was a quiet evening. A light breeze barely ruffled the smooth surface of the Gulf of Finland. We had a very pleasant trip around the ships of the Squadron and then made for the harbor, as it was time for Father to take his train. As we were passing the *Rusalka* it was already dusk and her low black hull was barely visible in the twilight. The bright anchor light on the foremast illuminated the heavy main yard.

"Just like a cross over a tomb," Kirilov remarked, with an unexpected wistfulness. His remark was so incongruous to the mood of the evening that we were all startled.

"Nonsense!" said Father. "You had too many of these excellent crawfish for dinner!"

The *Rusalka* sailed the next day in the teeth of a howling gale that swept the Gulf from the northeast. She was never heard from again. The gunboat disappeared so completely that all the search parties sent out by the navy, all the dragging and sweeping of the sea floor between Reval and Helsingfors, never brought forth a trace of her. A dinghy of the *Rusalka* was cast up by the waves on an island near Helsingfors, and later a few life buoys belonging to her were recovered. There were many theories as to the disaster. The most plausible was that she had struck some uncharted rock and had sunk so rapidly that there was no chance to lower the boats in the tempestuous weather that lashed the Gulf to a fury. The storm continued for several days. The Kirilov family waited in agony for some favorable news of the gunboat. Adler, their red-bearded friend, sat with them

all day long. First he tried to suggest some more or less reasoned guesses as to the possibility of some of the ship's boats with surviving men being stranded on some small island in the Gulf. Later, in the face of complete lack of reassuring news, he abandoned his attempts to keep up their hopes.

Adler was deeply affected by the sudden loss of his friend. His nerves went to pieces. For several days he was seen wandering in the park, neglecting his duties. He would walk down to the water, accompanied by his beautiful Irish setter, muttering under his breath, and stop on the shore to stare wild-eyed into the sea that had robbed him of his friend.

Father wrote us to return to St. Petersburg, as he had received an appointment in the Artillery Department of the Admiralty, and was keen to establish our new home as soon as possible. Since then practically all of our friends have left Reval, and the striking monument to the memory of officers and men of the gunboat placed on the shore at Ekaterinenthal, which Adler haunted in despair over Kiri-lov's death, stands on alien soil, since Russia lost Reval to the new Estonian state.

Only recently, more than forty years after her disappearance, I read a garbled report in the newspapers that the Soviet navy had found the wreck of the *Rusalka*. To me, however, the tragedy is still as vivid as if it had happened yesterday.

That summer at Reval had a great deal to do with the shaping of my future. I set my heart on becoming a naval officer and entered the Naval College at St. Petersburg after graduating from the Gymnasium of the Imperial Historico-Philological Institute. Father was much opposed to my choice of the navy as a career, as he considered that both temperamentally and physically I was not suited to the profession of the sea. He wanted me to become a scientist or, failing that, to enter the diplomatic service. His doubts as to my health were justified in a measure, as at first I was rejected by the medical board of the Naval College and passed ultimately only a year later, after undergoing a strenuous régime of health building and taking things easy as far as studies were concerned.

The disappearance of the *Rusalka* in the waters of the Gulf of Finland had a strange effect on me, which was later still further accentuated by the defeat of the Russian fleet in the Russo-Japanese War. It did not in the least weaken my determination to become a seaman. Rather the contrary: as a youngster I was convinced that,

first, there was something worth while in risking one's life for one's country in peacetime as well as in war, and second, that it was up to my generation to make the Russian navy a strong force, to eliminate the possibility of such incidents as the *Rusalka* catastrophe, and to bring the flag of St. Andrew to a place of honor on the seven seas, as in the days of Admiral Seniavin.

My schoolmates at the Gymnasium ridiculed the very idea of anyone being interested in becoming a naval officer in the face of the defeat at Tsushima, but this had not the slightest influence upon me. Like many youngsters, I felt that as long as a strong navy was necessary for the safety and greatness of my country, it was up to me to join the service, popular or unpopular, perhaps the more so because of its unpopularity.

Ultimately I had my way and graduated from the Naval College in 1910. Thereupon I sailed to the Mediterranean in the old battleship *Slava*, as a Post Midshipman. Upon promotion to Sub-Lieutenant's rank, I served on board the battleship *Imperator Pavel* and the cruiser *Pallada*, and was later appointed instructor to the Executive Petty Officers' School on board the old armored cruiser *Rossiia*.

The years aboard this ship exercised a very important influence on my viewpoint and character. Probably the most powerful was that of Lieutenant Baron Nicholas von Hoiningen Huene, whose remarkable administrative talents and qualities of leadership in building up the School, combined with a fine wit and broad understanding of the crucial problems of personnel relations, made a very deep impression on me. Several very close friendships were formed while on board the *Rossiia*, some of which have survived the stress of revolution and exile, in spite of differences in political outlook which have gradually developed since 1917.

The months spent in foreign waters, in the Mediterranean, in English and French channel ports, in the West Indies, and finally in America, brought a considerable number of new influences to bear on the development of my views, as well as my attitude toward affairs in Russia. Being by inclination a Westerner, in the Russian sense of the word, even since early youth, the long sojourns abroad helped to accentuate this tendency and led me to look for the solution of the various Russian problems in terms of European civilization rather than in those of Russian tradition. This did not at all affect my pride in serving Russia, or my admiration for the essential traits of the Russian character. It merely alienated me from those Russians who felt that Russia had a separate mission of her own, and wanted her to de-

velop along some specific, if not clearly defined lines of "Russia, the Third Rome." I was satisfied with the goal set by Peter the Great when he cut his "Window on to Europe," in order to bring Russia into the comity, if such existed, of European nations.

KIEL ON THE EVE OF WAR

ON A misty morning in early June, 1914, the old four-funneled armored Russian cruiser *Rossiia* slowly nosed its way up the bay to the roadstead of the German Naval Base at Kiel. She threaded a wary path among the light gray ships of the German navy, lying drowsily at their buoys like so many huge pieces of Copenhagen porcelain placed by a collector of bric-a-brac on the pale green waters.

Before the war Kiel was a pleasant seaport city, sleepy, and still retaining some of its prim Danish character, but not without its moments of gaiety culminating in the yacht races of the *Kieler Woche*.

The Captain sent for me as soon as the *Rossiia* was moored to the buoy reserved for her by the harbor master, next to that of the German battleship *Preussen*. He wanted me to make the usual round of calls on behalf of the ship, and leave cards at the Naval Officers' Club, the Imperial Yacht Club, and other clubs of Kiel that had extended the privileges of membership to us during our last visit.

I donned my frockcoat and cocked hat, buckled on my sword and left with the next steam launch destined for shore. As I was walking from the landing-stage to the Naval Officers' Club through the streets of Kiel that I knew so well, I noticed that the people were eying me in a strange manner. The usual cheerful smiles were not forthcoming. The good citizenry of Kiel had a sullen, even hostile air about them as my cocked hat hove in view. This obvious change of attitude puzzled me. The *Rossiia* had spent the winter in the West Indies and in the Mediterranean, and my information as to European current political events was more than sketchy. Nothing that I knew provided any clue to the unfriendly looks I encountered.

My foot was already on the first step of the stairs leading to the premises of the German Naval Officers' Club, when a young middle-class German approached, lifted his black bowler, and asked me whether I was an officer of the *Rossiia*.

I replied that the *Rossia* was the only Russian man-of-war in port, and that every officer or naval rating in Russian uniform ashore at Kiel belonged to her complement.

"And, *bitte*, why didn't you come in yesterday, as you were expected to do?"

The question was a most unusual one from a German civilian to a man in foreign uniform.

"We were delayed by fog in the Belt, and had to anchor there for a while," I answered, somewhat annoyed by the fellow's inquisitiveness.

"Do you know that the whole town was all agog over your delay? Many thought that you were purposely hiding in the fog in order to attack Kiel at daybreak."

"*Mein lieber Herr*," I exclaimed, losing all patience; "this is going too far! To the best of my knowledge, our countries are not at war. Besides, why should we deliberately court suicide by an attempt to bombard a port chock full of ships of the German navy?"

The stranger apologized and expressed his satisfaction that our delay was caused by nature and not by malice aforethought, and we parted with friendly salutations.

My business at the Club did not detain me long. The social rooms were filled with naval officers, apparently having a corking good time over their lunch. Many shouts of "*famos*" or "*unerhoert*" reached my ears above the clatter of knives and forks in the Mess Room. The *Rossia's* Wardroom card was duly conveyed to the Secretary. He came out to meet me in the lobby. To my surprise this worthy was exceedingly cool, merely thanking me for my call. He did not ask me to come in or detain me longer than was necessary to explain that he was exceedingly busy and regretted that the press of work was so great that he must hurry back to his desk.

At the Imperial Yacht Club the same story was repeated.

It began to dawn upon me that the fantastic remarks of the civilian and the cold, almost insulting reception at both clubs belonged in the same crazy-quilt pattern, and I told the Captain so when I returned aboard.

Our chubby little Captain, nicknamed "Pickwick," to whom he bore striking physical and moral resemblance, paid more attention to my remarks than I had expected. He told me that so far there had been no social calls on our Wardroom from any German ship. However, our naval attaché, the subtle and suave Captain Behrens, was due from Berlin with the next train, so there was no use making any

fuss until we had an opportunity of discussing matters with him.

Behrens duly arrived and, after seeing the Captain, came down to the Wardroom to speak to me. He deprecated my suggestion that there was something amiss and told me he had seen the Kaiser only a few days before and had found him very friendly and without any trace of the petulance so characteristic of His Majesty in times of impending crisis. To guard against any possibility of trouble, however, the Captain did not allow shore leave to the men, and it was decided to sail as soon as we were through with bunkering. The next day was profitably and pleasantly spent in filling the empty bunkers of the *Rossiia* with coal and grooming the ship back to her usual state of immaculate cleanliness. My pal, Baron Wladislas Fersen, had the four-to-eight watch. As I emerged from inspecting the part of the ship for which I was particularly responsible, he beckoned to me and said, as I walked up the quarter-deck to him: "Here's a strange bit of news for you. These Dutchmen from the *Preussen* have sent a scribbled note, inviting us to come aboard after dinner for a *Bierabend*. And this without previously calling or greeting us in any shape or form. The Commander wants to see you about it."

When I went down to the Wardroom, I found the Commander at his usual place at the huge horseshoe mess table sipping his tea from a tall glass in an elaborate silver holder. Several other officers, similarly occupied, were grouped around him.

He greeted me in his usual brusque way: "Did Wladislas tell you about the invitation?"

"Yes, sir. He did."

The Commander handed over to me a rather untidy note hastily penned in German on a sheet of the *Preussen's* Wardroom stationery. The message ran more or less as follows:

"To the Officers of the Imperial Russian Cruiser *Rossiia*

The Captain and the Commander are ashore. Come about seven in the evening for an informal time, and some beer."

This chit was about the most informal communication I had ever seen passed between Wardrooms of ships belonging to different navies. The intent, however, was plain. The German officers wanted to meet us informally and unofficially, and it would hardly be good policy to refuse. We knew them for decent fellows, and there was no reason for turning down the invitation merely because certain formalities had not been complied with.

"I think we should go over in sufficiently large numbers to show that we appreciate the spirit which prompted them to such informal

friendliness. Our Barons seem to be the logical people to go, as they can speak the lingo and are fond of beer."

The *Rossia* had a fair number of officers of Baltic German descent, people with good old German names, loyal subjects of the Tsar and excellent shipmates. They were known as Barons, as many of the Baltic nobility had that title, which was rare among the Russians proper.

The Barons agreed to go if the Commander so advised, but felt that I should also go along to show that not only Russians of German descent had accepted but that all the officers of the *Rossia* appreciated their offer of hospitality.

After dinner our fast motor launch, the apple of "Pickwick's" eye and the pride of the ship, carried us to the *Preussen* just as six bells had struck. The German officers crowded on the quarter-deck to meet us and gave us a hearty welcome, and in a few minutes we were seated at the mess table of the cosy Wardroom of the *Preussen*. Seidels of foaming Bavarian beer succeeded each other with lightning rapidity, while the tiny gold specks of Dantziger Goldwasser sparkled in the light from the chandeliers. Zither music and popular songs performed with professional excellence by bluejackets added to the mellowness of the evening.

Our hosts were putting their best foot forward to entertain us. The atmosphere of the Wardroom was most friendly and gay. My neighbor on the left was jokingly complaining that a ship like the *Preussen* was at a distinct disadvantage as compared with those named after cities.

"Take the *Muenchen*, for example. They never have to pay for their beer. The Munich municipality sends them so many barrels of the best brew with their compliments. Every city is proud to have a ship in the navy named after it, and does all it can to be pleasant to the officers and men of its namesake. But Prussia's so big, and impersonal—we never get even a bag of potatoes from East Prussia."

My other neighbor was in a more serious vein: "How long do they think we're going to stand this infernal tempo of training? We are simply ground down by it. Figure it out for yourself: We weigh every Monday morning and proceed to some Godforsaken spot. We drill, drill, drill every day of the week until we get back on Saturday. It's a factory, not a navy. Both officers and men are fed up with the monotony and the strain. You're lucky devils to cruise about the seven seas as you do."

As the evening went on we felt it would be a pity to break up. I

suggested to the Barons that we invite the Wardroom of the *Preussen* for a midnight supper. They were all for it, and a note was despatched to the Commander, explaining the situation, while we wigwagged to the steward of the *Rossiia* to prepare some supper and put a couple of dozen of Veuve Cliquot on ice. Then the senior got up and said that as we were weighing at six in the morning, our only chance to return the very pleasant hospitality we had enjoyed was to extend an invitation to the officers of the *Preussen* for supper on board the *Rossiia*. The speech was received with much enthusiasm, and all officers free from duty accepted forthwith.

Our steward did himself proud. By the time we reached the Wardroom of the *Rossiia* with a boatload of our guests, the horseshoe table was groaning under the weight of all kinds of *zakouskas*, both cold and piping hot. Gray-black, large-grained Beluga caviar in hollow chunks of ice, large pots of paté de foie gras from Périgord, game pies from England, huge hams from Prague, cold boiled sturgeon cunningly garnished with vegetables cut in fancy shapes—it all looked very tempting amid the minor attractions of the usual ingredients of the Scandinavian smörgasbord. Bedewed decanters of crystal-clear vodka, greenish Zubrovka, pale orange mountain-ash gin were supported by an assortment of Kümmels, Allash, Calvados, and Aquavit. The supper was a huge success. While our German friends did not like vodka, and drank but a glass or two out of sheer politeness, they found the mountain-ash gin and the Calvados very much to their liking.

The conversation was even more informal than on board the *Preussen*. A great deal of naval shop was swapped, as usually happens when naval officers meet. This was interlarded with reminiscences of the West Indies and inquiries about friends in St. Thomas, Barbados, and Jamaica. The last hit at the Folies-Bergères and our recent visit to the United States also came in for discussion, and our friends were much interested to hear what we thought of the American navy, the New York subways, the Metropolitan Opera, and American girls.

When the table was cleared and the apéritifs replaced by quarts of Veuve Cliquot's gaily bubbling wine, the senior of the German officers got up and sounded a signal by hitting his champagne glass with a knife. To our surprise he made a lengthy speech.

"We thank the officers of the Imperial Russian Cruiser *Rossiia* for the friendly and intimate way they have received us tonight. The

officers of His Majesty's Ship *Preussen* will forever remember this evening."

He waved his hand to indicate the fullness of his feelings, then, bringing his heels together, raised the glass to the level of his eyes and looking at the Commander, said:

"You spent the winter in far-away ports, where newspapers are not very informative as to European politics. You do not know what actually happened while you were away. Your diplomats have played a clever hand and have completely outmaneuvered ours."

A howl of protest rose from the table. Diplomats were not favorites with Russian naval officers.

"Swap them for yours any time! Take them as a Christmas present! You never saw them, if you think they can outmaneuver anybody!"

The German again waved his hand.

"No, gentlemen, you're mistaken. Your diplomats have earned their salt this time. Germany is facing a cold and unfriendly world. We stand practically alone. Only Austria is with us. And this brings me to the important part of what I have to say tonight."

At a sign from him all the German officers sprang to attention, heels together, chests out, glasses in their right hands.

"It is very probable that we shall be at war with your country quite soon. You, as well as we, are professional naval officers. We shall have to fight as best we know when our Emperors decide it shall be war."

By this time we were very serious. Our heads were clear of vodka and the fumes of champagne. This was the most unexpected and the most dangerous thing a naval officer could say in the Wardroom of a friendly nation's ship. My first thought was that the man had had one drink too many, or that the wish was father to the thought.

Our Commander looked straight ahead, his wide clean-shaven face bereft of any sign of emotion.

"So," continued the spokesman, "it looks as though we'll have to fight pretty soon. But does that mean that our personal friendly feelings will be affected by what really is the performance of our professional duties?"

"The fellow's insane," thought I. And the same thought was reflected on the faces of those of my shipmates who could understand German. The Commander, still looking very bland and unruffled, lifted his glass and said, in his precise, carefully worded English:

"We also see no reason why such a little thing as war should interfere with personal friendships such as ours. After all, war is a tourney, so far as we are concerned. Some will have to bite the dust, but it is all in the game."

I could not be certain that there was not a merry twinkle in the Commander's eye. He was known for his dry humor.

The German, thus encouraged, continued: "We are all members of the same social class. Our interests are more or less identical. Some of you even look more German than we. Others among you bear honored German names. We have relatives on both sides of the border. May our friendship survive the next war! *Hoch* to our friends, the officers of the Imperial Russian Cruiser *Rossia*!"

Stiff as ramrods, our German guests drank their toast and lifted empty glasses to us.

The Commander rose again: "We accept your toast. I drink to our friends, the officers of His German Majesty's Ship *Preussen*."

The German was on his feet again: "As long as you feel about it as you do, we are going to leave you a small present."

He produced a large package, opened it and handed to our Commander a photograph of the *Preussen*'s officers. Numerous signatures covered the white margin, and at the top was the following in Gothic script with elaborate flourishes: "Remember that whatever may happen, you will have true friends in Germany."

It looked as if there was method in his madness, and that the whole thing had been planned in advance and had not spontaneously originated from vodka and bubbly.

The Commander sent for our ship's parrot, a homely-looking gray bird among whose chief accomplishments was her ability to swear long, complicated, and very sulphurous oaths in four languages. Quite solemnly he said that as we were unprepared for the occasion we could not reciprocate in an entirely suitable manner, but that he hoped they would accept the bird as a memento of their evening on board the *Rossia*. After all, our ship's popinjay would always remind them, sometimes perhaps in an embarrassing manner, of our Wardroom.

Whereupon the party broke up.

We slipped our moorings early in the morning and steamed away to Kronstadt. The photograph was kept in the Commander's room as a reminder of the strange behavior of the officers of the *Preussen*.

MOBILIZATION

1914

DURING the weeks preceding the declaration of war, I was seriously ill and on sick leave, living at my parents' country place at Tarkhovka, some fifteen miles from St. Petersburg.

The best specialists of the capital advised me to go without delay to Karlsbad to be operated on and treated. As I was following closely the development of events in Europe after the murder of the Archduke Ferdinand, I was disinclined to heed their advice, as I did not want to run the risk, in the event of war, of being interned in Austria. However, the doctors told me repeatedly and emphatically that unless I went to Karlsbad immediately they would not answer for my life.

The *Rurik*, flagship of the Commander-in-Chief of the Baltic Fleet, arrived at Kronstadt, and I decided to take advantage of the opportunity of seeing Admiral von Essen in order to discuss with him my trip abroad.

The trip to Kronstadt was very unpleasant, as even the slight motion of the ferry from Lissii Nos made me violently sick and added very considerably to my pain. I reached the *Rurik* about eleven in the morning, and the Admiral's secretary told me that the Commanding Admiral would see me immediately.

In a few moments I was ushered into the Admiral's reception room, and the little red-haired chief of the Baltic Fleet met me near the door and acknowledged the official formula of my salutation by an informal:

"I hear you are ill. I hope it is nothing serious and that rest and change will cure you completely."

Admiral von Essen knew me personally and was an old friend of

my family. Like all the naval officers of my generation, I greatly admired and respected this dynamic, straightforward seaman.

I told him frankly about the doctors' advice and asked him whether I could safely go to Austria under present political conditions.

"I am not asking you, sir, to reveal any state secrets to me. A mere word from you that it would be better for me to postpone my trip to Karlsbad would suffice. You realize that the idea of becoming a prisoner of war at the very outset of hostilities is appalling to me, and I don't want to run any risks in that respect."

"My dear boy, I have no secrets to divulge. As usual there are a great many rumors as to the possibility of an imminent war. However, there is nothing that I really know from the Naval General Staff or the Minister of Marine that indicates that there is more to these rumors than in 1913 or 1912. Russia does not want war, and I do not think that Germany would gain anything by declaring war on us. Go to Karlsbad, by all means, and get the best of medical assistance and advice."

I took my leave and went to Tarkhovka to get ready for the trip to Austria.

The next day I had to go to St. Petersburg to obtain my passport and to make arrangements for a *wagon-lit* berth and hotel accommodation at Karlsbad. As I was walking down the Nevskii, the visiting President of the French Republic passed along the street. Poincaré sat rather stiffly in a court carriage, escorted by a dashing troop of the Tsar's bodyguard of Caucasian Cossacks. Their pink *cherkesskas* had barely rounded the corner when a grim black-jacketed crowd of workingmen surged into the Nevskii from a side street. "We don't want war!" "Down with capitalism!" "Down with Poincaré the war-monger!" Instead of the gay pink coats of the Cossacks a blood-red phalanx of flags and posters was raised above scowling, dead-serious faces, and bobbed in rhythm to the funereal music of a revolutionary march.

I stepped to the curb and watched the crowd, which consisted mainly of skilled workers from the industrial plants. They were modestly but respectably dressed. Not the scum of a large city, by any means. Horny handed, yes, but not stupid or brutal.

The tune changed to the stirring pæan of the *International*. Hands grasped the flagstuffs more firmly, eyes went up, feet stamped the ground like those of soldiers on the march past their chief. One group followed another, workers from the Putilov Works, from the ship-building yards, from the Obukhov gun factory. . . .

"Admiral von Essen must be right," I thought. "With the working masses at the capital in such a mood, any government would think twice before declaring war. Nineteen-five is not yet distant enough for the Ministers to forget what happened then."

Upon returning to Tarkhovka, I walked over to the house of my father's friend, General Petrov, and told the family what I had seen in St. Petersburg. A young officer of the Preobrazhenskii Guards, who was their house guest, made light of my pessimism as to the temper of the people with respect to the government.

"Just wait till war is declared! Things will look different then. It will not be like the Japanese War. This time the enemy will be Germany. And every Russian peasant dislikes the Germans intensely. The popular enthusiasm will equal that during the Napoleonic invasion."

After a few glasses of wine at dinner the young guardsman became even more bellicose and told us that he had heard from the Grand Duke Nicholas himself when the latter visited their mess a few days before, that war was unavoidable and this time we were well prepared for it. He brushed aside my remarks to the effect that the army had not yet completed its reorganization and that we were very short of military stores of all kinds. Also that with our naval material in its present condition even von Essen would not be able to prevent a complete blockade of St. Petersburg from the sea, so that our chances of receiving ammunition from abroad would be very poor.

"Bah, your navy! That's not important. The war will be decided on shore. Our allies, the French, have a wonderful plan of attack and will smash the Germans while we make short shrift of the Austrians. If you want to see any fighting, better resign from the navy and join the Guards."

As the Petrovs were all naval people, these last remarks were somewhat coldly received by the family.

The next day I felt so low that departure for Karlsbad was out of the question. I canceled my reservations by telephone and spent the day in an agony of pain. My brother arrived, also on sick leave, so that I had company and could discuss with him the pros and cons of the naval situation on the Baltic.

We both came to the conclusion that the Germans would be able to break through our mine defenses at Reval with a comparatively small loss and that our fleet would probably be entirely destroyed in action, as after the shame of the Japanese War a retreat of the fleet to Kronstadt would not be morally possible. We both thought that the Germans would use their entire fleet in the Baltic and would land

a strong force in Finland, in the hope of getting active support from the Finns. The fate of St. Petersburg seemed to be hanging in the balance right at the very beginning of the war.

When I felt better again I went to St. Petersburg to renew my reservations and see some friends at the Naval General Staff to find out the latest news as to the possibility of war. Walking up the Nevskii I met a German chorus girl from the Luna Park night club, an open-air resort then in vogue. I knew the girl slightly, and passed the time of day with her.

"Did you hear all these terrible rumors about war?" she asked me.

I answered her in German, telling her not to pay any attention to the nonsense printed in the papers, that our two countries had been friends for so long that it was unthinkable for us to go to war just because an Austrian archduke had been murdered by an Austrian subject.

"I'm afraid to talk German in the street now. Everyone gives me such dirty looks. Wouldn't it be better for us to speak French?"

I assured her that she ran no risks in speaking German in St. Petersburg, and suggested that we lunch together at Donon's. The girl agreed eagerly. She was obviously afraid to be alone in these now unfriendly streets of the Russian capital. We strolled leisurely to the restaurant, talking about a revue in which my companion had a minor part.

The food was good, and the pernicious cocktail habit had not as yet invaded Russia to spoil one's enjoyment of it. A bottle of Moselle helped to improve our spirits, and by the time the lunch was over we had both forgotten all about war rumors and the Archduke's murder. I suggested that we dine together early, so as not to interfere with Gertie's engagement at Luna Park, and go to the Novaia Derevnia to hear the gypsies after her performance was over.

In a gay, careless mood we sallied forth into the street. The first thing we saw was a column of soldiers in khaki and full field equipment moving at a brisk pace, and being lustily cheered by the crowd. The thin gossamer web of our gaiety was torn asunder, and the remnants of its shreds vanished as we heard the newsboys shouting shrilly: "Partial mobilization ordered. Russia will not forsake her Slav brothers. Serbia preparing to resist haughty Austria."

Newspapers were eagerly snatched and groups formed on the sidewalks, discussing the news and its import. Another column of troops passed, playing a Sousa march. Renewed cheering.

I felt a wave of berserk anger surging in me. In a fraction of a sec-

and I lived through abysses of bitterness and despair. I was certain then that the war was inevitable. I felt both by instinct and reason that Russia could not win; that the régime was doomed and that we should all be engulfed in the cataclysm. I saw all this with an almost apocalyptic vividness. My thoughts were darker even than the tempestuous future that lay ahead of us. I saw German soldiers in St. Petersburg before Christmas, all my friends in the navy swallowed by the lead-gray waves of the Gulf of Finland, after a desperate defense of the mine fields at its entrance. I did not feel at one with the cheering crowd, with the smiling officers merrily acknowledging the plaudits of the multitude by smart salutes of their brown-gloved hands. I stood there like a sane person in a lunatic asylum, watching some maniacs gambol.

"Ah, the fools, the triple fools!" I shouted in German to Gertie. "What are they cheering about? They'd better weep over old Russia which will soon cease to exist!"

The poor girl was thoroughly frightened and cowed.

"What should I do? What should I do? They'll put me in prison as an enemy!"

"You'd better go to your consulate right away and get your passport put in order and take the next train to Sweden via Finland. Let's go to the Bennett Bureau and get you a berth for tonight."

As I was talking to the suave-mannered clerk at the Bureau, I was turning over in my head my own plans for the morrow. I must return to my ship, ill or well. Everything would be over with the Baltic Fleet so soon that unless I rejoined my ship the next day I should never see it again. My country had gone crazy, but it was my sworn duty to defend it just the same. Not that I was looking forward with much enthusiasm to the slaughter of our old ships by the German dreadnaughts.

I went to buy a new pair of prismatic binoculars, a good automatic pistol, and a stout rubber raincoat. These purchases I thought would cover my requirements for the next few days.

In the evening I called for Gertie at her tiny flat and took her to the Finland Railroad station to save her any possible unpleasantness with the crowd, should they notice her German accent. As the train was leaving, the poor girl, who had been practically a stranger to me until that day, broke down completely, wept bitterly, her vividly painted lips leaving scarlet traces all over my face, as she kissed me good-bye.

"Give me your address; I will write you after the end of the war.

My brother is a *Freiwilliger*.^{*} God knows what is going to happen to him."

The next day at noon found me with my brother at Kronstadt. To our dismay we found that our respective ships had already completed their mobilization and sailed for Reval. We went around the Naval Harbor in quest of a ship due to sail to Reval and short of officers. An old destroyer, attached as a tender to the Gunnery Training Squadron, filled the bill for us. She was about to slip her moorings and had only one officer aboard in addition to the Captain. We offered our services in return for transportation to Reval, and the Captain welcomed us warmly aboard.

I was asked to take charge of the bridge and took the ship out, following the familiar landmarks. Soon we were past the Tolbukhin lighthouse and were bucking a choppy sea churned up by a fresh northwesterly wind.

At first everything went well and I was able to overcome the attacks of pain which came on as soon as the ship began to pitch. However, I could not keep it up for more than half an hour. At the end of that time I could no longer stand upright and had to send for my brother and ask him to take over the watch.

The rest of the voyage I spent in a bunk in a tiny room assigned to me by the Captain. He was very pleasant and from time to time came to tell me the news. The destroyer had no wireless and all news was derived from signals and wigwag messages from the steamers we encountered on our way to Reval. Most of the information was sensational and contradictory. The fleet had gone out to meet the Germans. The cruiser *Rossiia* was sunk by a German submarine. The cruiser *Bogatyr* was blown up on a mine. The fleet was at Reval. No sign of the German navy. And so on. At first we got excited over the news, but as it became more and more sensational we ceased asking the steamers for further information.

When we reached Reval we found both the *Rossiia* and the *Bogatyr* lying at anchor. The former had no gangway and was obviously preparing to weigh. As I was too weak to climb the Jacob's ladder I was hoisted up on a seat. Apparently my complexion and general state of debility impressed our newly appointed Admiral most unfavorably, for he spoke to Commander Shevelev (who was temporarily in command of the *Rossiia* because of the sudden departure of our Captain, who had reported unfit for duty) saying that I ought to be sent ashore as I looked bad enough to scare some of the

^{*} Short-term service volunteer.

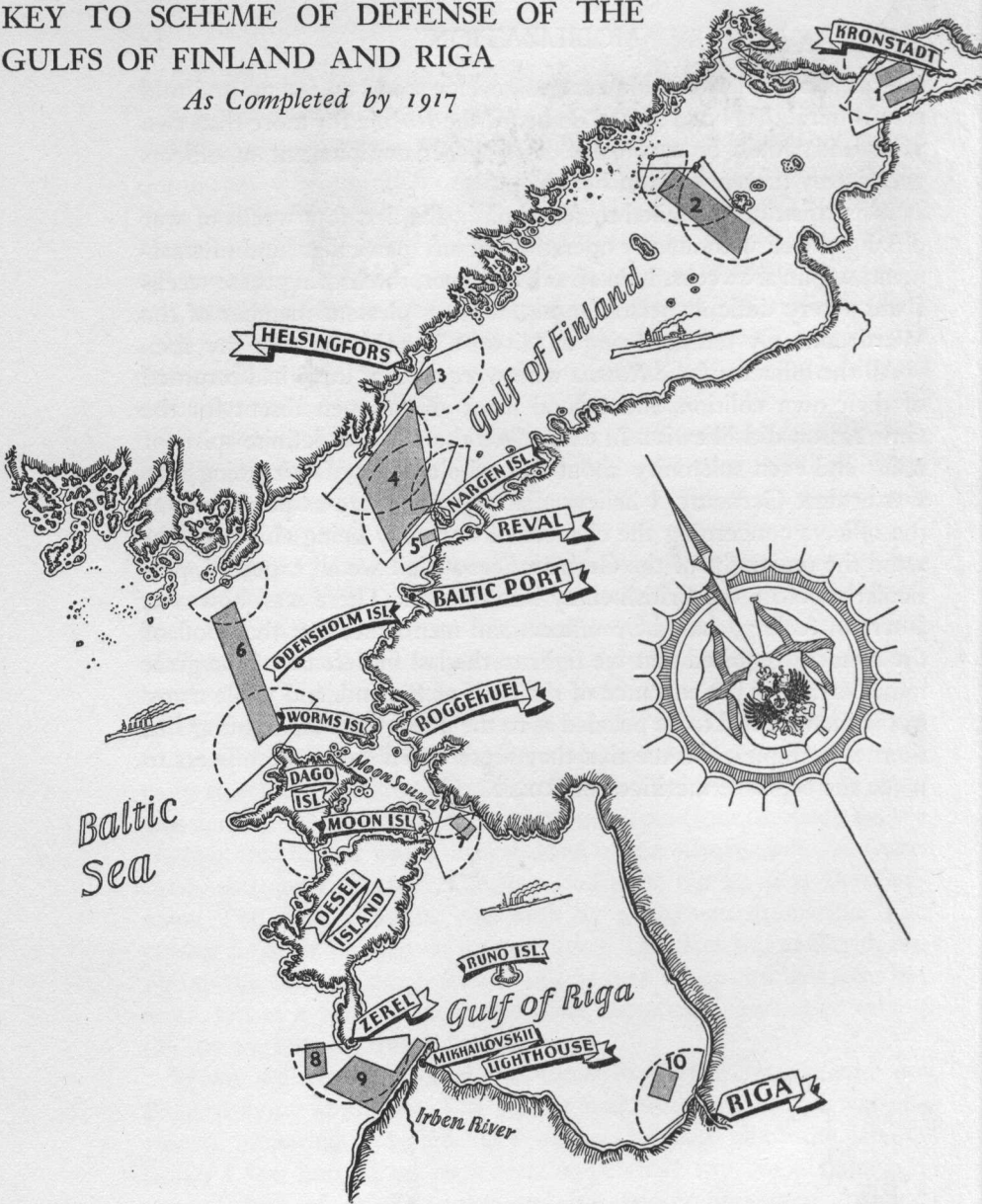
more timid bluejackets. However, Shevelev stood up for me and told the Admiral that I had served on board the *Rossiia* for more than two years and would be a valuable asset to her complement of officers even in my present state of health.

What the doctors failed to accomplish, the first few weeks of war did. I got well without any operation, or any particular kind of treatment, within six weeks. I am afraid, however, that during these weeks I was a very difficult person and a far from pleasant member of the Wardroom, my temper being as "liverish" as the shade of my skin.

All the officers of the *Rossiia* who were on sick leave had returned of their own volition, and a good many of the men absent for the same reason did likewise. In these days there was a definite spirit of unity and even solemnity about this whole affair of our going into war against Germany. I believe that the men were as pessimistic as the officers concerning the chances of our navy being able to withstand the onslaught of the German fleet which we all expected, particularly before the British entry into the war. There was, however, a certain feeling, shared by officers and men alike, that the good of the country required that we fight to the last in defense of the great mine barrage at the entrance of the Gulf of Finland, and while many of the men seemed to be puzzled as to the issues we were fighting for, there was ample evidence that they were as willing as the officers to make the supreme sacrifice for Russia.

KEY TO SCHEME OF DEFENSE OF THE GULFS OF FINLAND AND RIGA

As Completed by 1917



KEY

- 1 to 10 MINE FIELDS
- PLACES
- ISLANDS
- BODIES OF WATER
- Land Batteries (fields of fire)

SCALE of MILES

0 10 20 30 40 50

Gejszel

A MINE-LAYING EXPEDITION

DURING the first few weeks of the war, I was very much preoccupied with the question of the relative efficacy of submarines and surface naval craft. Not that my interest in that matter had any importance, since my duties were those of a watch lieutenant of the *Rossia* in charge of the batteries on the port side. However, a war game, in which I was to command one of the sides, provided an incentive to study the fundamentals of naval warfare.

Most of my contemporaries, including my friends in the *Rossia*, did not look upon submarines as a serious weapon of naval warfare. Probably the weakness of the Russian navy in that class of ships had something to do with this attitude. To a certain extent the weakness of our submarines somehow affected our judgment about submarines in general. I was not convinced by my friends' arguments, however, and thought that the submarine had a place in naval warfare and that as long as our fleet was weak in that arm we should apply ourselves to the development of means of protecting our surface ships and our harbors from German submarines.

This branch of the service was only very slightly developed in the Russian navy at the time. The first set of instructions for the protection of roadsteads and harbors from submarine attack had a slight touch of *H.M.S. Pinafore* about them. As some of the humorous young officers of the *Rossia's* Wardroom had it, the picket boats and other small craft assigned to keeping our roadsteads clear of the submarine menace were operating under the following instructions: "Carry a large sledge hammer. Upon sighting a submarine make for the periscope at full speed and try to destroy the said periscope with the above-mentioned sledge hammer, or, failing this, put an empty flour bag on it to blind the enemy craft." Perhaps the instructions

were not as funny as that, but that was how they looked to the more humorously minded of our group. There were, of course, nets and booms, as well as the excellent personnel of the Signal Service to keep track of any enemy submarine appearing in our waters.

The Russian navy was not alone in this slightly supercilious attitude toward the submarines: witness the fate that befell the three cruisers of the British Seventh Cruiser Squadron on September 22, 1914. The *Cressy*, the *Aboukir*, and the *Hogue* were sunk by an obsolete German submarine during the days when we were still discussing the value of submarines in war.

Even the sinking of the British cruisers did not put an end to our discussions. Destroyers were assigned as escorts to cruisers on patrol, but in many quarters the opinion was maintained that the catastrophe which befell the Seventh British Cruiser Squadron was a mere freak. While we were carrying on one of these arguments news reached us that the cruiser *Admiral Makarov*, which stopped to inspect a sailing vessel flying a foreign flag, was attacked by a submarine which fired three torpedoes, two of which passed ahead of her and one aft.

A few additional precautions were taken, such as a better arrangement of submarine lookouts, and more guns were manned and loaded when at sea.

The next day it was the turn of the *Rossia* with the *Aurora* to take over the patrol duties at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland, replacing the *Pallada* and *Baian*. We went out to our rendezvous in the northwestern part of the Gulf without any destroyer escort and met the two cruisers we were relieving returning from patrol.

The *Pallada* was an old ship of mine. I had served in her in 1911 and knew most of her officers quite well. I was on watch in charge of the bridge when we met the two ships, and could make out through my glasses quite a few friendly faces on the poop deck of the *Pallada* as well as on her bridge. I waved my cap at them and they waved back.

Meanwhile the two small destroyers that were escorting the patrol cruisers turned about and took their places ahead of our bow. The *Pallada* and the *Baian* in their turn went to Lapvik unescorted. It was a calm day with fair visibility and I was zealously scanning the horizon with my glasses when the wireless room reported that they were making out signals of a German ship which they judged, by the power of her station, to be a cruiser. The Captain was in his room below. I passed on the message to him and sent one of our best signalmen aloft to try to locate the enemy ship. The radio room kept on

reporting that they were continuing to hear German messages, and soon I could see the masts and later the smokestacks of a German cruiser which was approaching us at full speed from a westerly direction. As far as I could judge, it was a ship of the *Augsburg* type. I immediately gave orders to sound general quarters and telephoned to the engine room to get ready to put on the fullest possible speed. At that moment the signal quartermaster, who was using the large prismatic glass, exclaimed: "Sir! An explosion! Probably one of our ships blown up."

I took the glass and could clearly see a cloud of black smoke gradually expanding over the surface of the sea, with a column of light brown smoke rising and assuming a mushroom formation. The bearing taken seemed to indicate that the explosion occurred in the vicinity of Lapvik, and I believed that the blown-up ship was the *Bogatyr*. As the Captain was not yet on the bridge I immediately sent word to him about the explosion. In the meantime the enemy cruiser was rapidly approaching, and a part of her superstructure was already clearly visible. I called the range-finding station to give the distance, which was about seventy cables, and repeated it to the officer at the fire-control apparatus, hoping that I should have the distinction of myself giving the order for the first salvo. Then the Captain came to the bridge and simultaneously we received a radio that the *Pallada* had been sunk by a submarine. The Captain decided that the *Augsburg* wanted to decoy us toward another submarine, so we changed our course. As we were already going at full speed our stern wave, colliding with the wavelets raised by a slight breeze, created the impression of the track of a torpedo. One of the petty officers stationed aft shouted: "Torpedo!" As I was still on the bridge, I could plainly see that there was no torpedo in sight, and shouted: "Mistake! There is no torpedo!"

Then I went to my battery. We took a course northward, the *Augsburg* also changed its course and we were soon out of sight of each other.

The evening of that day was one of the most painful of my life. We lay anchored in a sheltered bay of the Aland skerries, with the two destroyers patrolling at its entrance. We had received radio information that the *Pallada* had gone down (or rather was blown to pieces, as apparently her magazines had exploded) with her entire complement and that thus not a single officer or member of her crew was saved by the destroyers that had hurried to her assistance. Most of us had friends and classmates on board her. We had seen them,

happy and gay, waving their caps at us, less than an hour before the ship was lost. The fact that there was not a single survivor had a strong psychological effect upon us. There was little conversation that evening. In silence we walked the deck thinking of our dead friends and trying to work out each for himself the problem of anti-submarine defense. One thing was clear to all of us: The days of cruiser patrol at the mouth of the Gulf of Finland were over and an entirely different system of guarding the approaches to our waters must be adopted.

Those first weeks of the war, however, were by no means all as sad for us as the day of the sinking of the *Pallada*. There were quite a few interesting episodes which made up for the dullness of patrol duty. The most memorable of these was the grounding of the German cruiser *Magdeburg* near the Odensholm lighthouse on the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland and the short action between our ships, that cruiser and the German destroyers that were escorting her.

The *Rossiia* was lying at anchor in the Reval roadstead on August thirteenth. The night was foggy and the observation posts of the Signal Service along the coast reported exceedingly poor visibility. However, the patrol cruisers were maintaining their watch on the meridian of Dagerort lighthouse. Suddenly our routine was interrupted by a supplementary report from the post at Odensholm lighthouse that voices speaking in a foreign language were audible from the direction of the sea, but the fog was so dense that nothing definite could be seen by the lookout. The chief of the post surmised that a German ship was aground quite close to the lighthouse. The news was immediately flashed to the cruiser patrol, and a flotilla of small destroyers was ordered out to Odensholm.

In the meantime reports from the Odensholm post continued to follow one upon another. It was clearly established that a four-funneled cruiser was grounded and could not get off the reef. Also that a destroyer had come to her assistance. The next message was that the German ship had opened fire upon the lighthouse and that a landing party was being sent ashore.

The ships at Reval were immediately galvanized into action and the *Rossiia* received orders to get steam up and prepare to weigh anchor. As soon as we were ready, we were sent out to Odensholm and proceeded to feel our way cautiously in the dense fog through the mine field guarding the Surop Pass, which we succeeded in clearing safely. When we were in the Gulf we heard some gunfire in the distance and increased our speed, in spite of the pea-soup fog. Gen-

eral quarters were sounded and the men stood at the guns, peering into the murky darkness.

Suddenly the fog lifted and we saw a German cruiser on the rocks quite close to the Odensholm lighthouse, our patrol cruisers with some small destroyers hovering in the vicinity.

The *Magdeburg*—the enemy ship—was in bad shape. Her forward part was blown up and separated from the rest of the hull. Her first smokestack and the foremast had been blown down by the explosion and the other stacks had holes in them, apparently from the shell-fire of our ships. Her flag had been hauled down.

Later I learned what had happened: Our cruisers had located the *Magdeburg* and opened fire upon her and her escorting destroyer. The latter took on over two hundred men and left the *Magdeburg* to her fate. About forty men swam ashore and only a few remained on board. Meanwhile the fog had begun to lift. Narrowly escaping the attack of our own destroyers and nearly hitting one of them with an eight-inch shell, the patrol cruisers noticed that the *Magdeburg* had ceased to defend herself so they sent one of the small destroyers to board her. My classmate, Count Hamilton, was the first Russian to go aboard the German cruiser. He was met by a warrant officer and six German seamen. As Hamilton did not speak German, he inquired whether any of them spoke any other language. The warrant officer turned out to be an excellent French scholar. Hamilton told him that he wanted to lower the German ensign, which was still flying from the gaff, and proceeded to do so, with the help of one of the German seamen who went below to fetch a knife to cut the halliards, which were soaking wet and could not be easily loosened.

Until that time Hamilton thought that the seven men he saw were the only people aboard. However, when he ordered them to get into his whaleboat, the warrant officer informed him that the Captain of the cruiser was still in his room. Hamilton immediately sent one of the Germans to tell the Captain that he would like to see him. Then he went below and introduced himself, first speaking French and then English. The latter could not, or would not, understand him, and Hamilton, driven to the extremity of using the few words of German he knew, improvised the barbaric sentence: "*Wollen Sie nach Torpedo gehen?*" pointing at the same time in the direction of his destroyer. The Captain smiled and answered that while the invitation did not particularly appeal to him he had no choice, and asked permission to take a few things with him.

As they left the room, the Captain took his dirk which was hang-

ing on the wall and handed it to Hamilton. Hamilton rose to the occasion, saluted the German officer and said that as long as he was still aboard his ship he did not feel it right to disarm him, and returned the dirk. The Captain seemed to be touched by that small courtesy and shook him warmly by the hand. Upon reaching the destroyer he handed over his weapon to Admiral Nepenin.

The taking of the *Magdeburg* was in itself not a very important event. She was merely a light cruiser. However, the results of her grounding and her subsequent capture by the Russians were exceedingly significant and had a definite influence on the course of the war at sea. The Germans, in their haste to go on board the destroyer after the brief action with the Russian cruiser and the ensuing explosion of the ammunition magazine, failed to destroy their secret documents and these fell into the hands of our Signal Service. Hamilton, on making the round of the decks after he had taken the German Captain to the destroyer, noticed a large pile of all kinds of property heaped on the upper deck. Apparently the Germans had expected to land it aboard their destroyer but had had to abandon it when the Russian cruisers opened fire. In that pile he saw a canvas-bound object. Realizing that he had found a signal book, Hamilton moved it carefully with his foot so that the Germans would not notice it. Then he grabbed it and threw it to the men on his whaleboat. None of the Germans had noticed. Later on another book was discovered in the hands of a German officer who was drowned clasp ing it to his breast. His body was found by the divers who were sent to inspect the bottom of the sea in the vicinity of the *Magdeburg* when attempts were made to refloat the cruiser. Apparently that officer had either decided to sacrifice his life in order to prevent the signal book from falling into the enemy's hands, or had accidentally fallen into the water in trying to get on board the destroyer.

The decoding experts of the Signal Service and the Russian Naval General Staff found these signal books invaluable in deciphering German wireless signals. This made it possible for the Russian navy to read practically all German wireless messages, and gave a considerable advantage to our naval forces in subsequent operations. It may be of interest to note here that the Russian naval vessels did not use their sending sets while at sea, so as not to provide the Germans with any information concerning their whereabouts, as it was suspected that the Germans had some radio bearing stations and would be able to locate our ships, should the latter use their sending sets in enemy waters.

Our Signal Service was afraid that the Captain of the *Magdeburg* might become aware of the fact that these signal books had fallen into our hands, and would in some way try to inform his government. He was therefore sent to a Siberian prison camp and kept isolated from other prisoners of war. He managed to escape, however, and was recaptured after he had succeeded in reaching Mongolia.

Because of the close and friendly relations between the Russian Naval General Staff and the Admiralty, the Russian Government decided to share the secret of the deciphering of the German naval wireless signals with their allies. Commanders M. I. Smirnov and V. V. Romanov were sent accordingly to London with a complete copy of the documents and the results of the decoding efforts of the Russian experts, and handed them over personally to Mr. Winston Churchill, who makes mention of the episode in his *World Crisis*. According to Smirnov, it was stated that the possession of these documents by England was tantamount to doubling the British naval forces.

During the course of the war the German navy changed its word code several times but did not change the system. It simply shifted the word combinations forwards or backwards, usually by about fifty numbers. Therefore the Russian and British experts had no difficulty in keeping abreast of the changes and were able to continue to decipher German wireless messages. Apparently the Germans never learned that the Russians were able to decipher their code messages until after the Bolshevik Revolution. It is curious that the British official history of naval operations does not make mention of this interesting episode.

One of the lessons of the Russo-Japanese War that was thoroughly understood and utilized by the Russian navy during the World War was the use of mines as an offensive weapon. Today this matter is clear to anyone familiar with naval matters and seems self-evident. This was not so, however, in the beginning of the war, as any reader of Commander Bellairs' book on the Battle of Jutland may learn. The Russian navy was thus relatively better informed about the mine as an instrument of naval warfare than almost any fleet in Europe at the time.

In the very early days of the war the Russian navy did a good job in using the mine in a defensive way, planting the great mine barrage across the entrance to the Gulf of Finland on the Nargen-Porkalaudd line. Very soon the intensive use of the mine as a weapon of offense had developed in spite of the fact that the Russians did not possess at

the time any fast mine-laying vessels. To supply this deficiency destroyers were adapted for the purpose of mine-laying, and later some of the cruisers were also equipped with mine rails and launching appliances.

The Russian Baltic Fleet, its commanding admiral, von Essen, in particular, and the destroyer captains and younger officers in general, were thoroughly imbued with the spirit of offense and were champing at the bit behind the great mine field. Ships that were permitted to take part in these early offensive mining expeditions were greatly envied by officers of other vessels. This feeling of the officers was also emulated by the men.

The mining operations at first carried on by the destroyers began to bear fruit, as the German armored cruiser *Friedrich Karl* was lost on a mine field planted by the Special Half-Flotilla near Memel.

The *Rossiia* was considered for the purpose of mine-laying, but some hitch occurred, and it was decided to use her during the late fall months and in the winter as the fleet flagship and not to outfit her for mining purposes. This news caused a great deal of dissatisfaction and commotion among the officers, and some of the lieutenants, myself included, asked for transfer to the Mine-sweeping Detachment in order to register our disgust that our cruiser had been made into a floating hotel.

A. V. Kolchak, at that time a captain serving as Fleet Flag Captain for operations on Admiral von Essen's staff, had his quarters on board the *Rossiia*. A great favorite with the younger officers, he was not averse to chatting with us in the evenings and would come to the Wardroom for a smoke or a drink whenever he had a minute to spare. Several of us who were particularly anxious for the *Rossiia* to continue as a fighting ship spoke to Kolchak about the suitability of the cruiser for offensive mining enterprises behind the German patrol lines in the western Baltic. We pointed out to Kolchak that we could easily take two hundred mines, or even more, on our upper deck, that our cruising radius was more than sufficient, and finally pointed out with pride that our speed, in spite of the respectable age of our ship, which had fought with distinction in the Russo-Japanese War, was still above eighteen knots, while her armament was sufficient to enable her to cope with the lighter German cruisers and to get away before the heavier-armed German ships could come to the scene of action.

The question of the *Rossiia's* speed became a crucial one in this whole discussion. Our new captain, Podgurskii, was not very favor-



D. FEDOTOFF WHITE
on board the *Rossia*, December 1914

ably inclined toward the use of the *Rossiia* as a mining ship, and was somewhat pessimistic as to her speed. Kolchak, himself an exceedingly active man, was very sympathetic with our feelings and, upon thinking the matter over, arranged a smoker in his room, inviting the Captain, as well as three of us, headed by Lieutenant Bunin, our able navigation officer. After some preliminary beating about the bush Kolchak broached the question of the *Rossiia* making a trip into the western Baltic with a load of mines, in order to plant a mine field near German ports or on the routes of German patrol cruisers, which were pretty well known to our Intelligence Service because of the remarkable organization built up by Admiral Nepenin.

By this time we had all had a couple of drinks, and Podgurskii appeared to see the mining venture in a more rosy light than heretofore. That evening the matter was clinched, and it was decided that our ship would have the honor of going further west into the Baltic than any Russian surface ship since the beginning of the war. Orders were issued to construct the mine rails and to go ahead with the equipping of the ship with the appliances for launching mines. Our men were infected by our enthusiasm and were ready to work day and night to accomplish the equipping of the ship.

Three ships were assigned to the operation: *Rossiia* and the two cruisers *Oleg* and *Bogatyr*, the latter also taking on mines. Rear-Admiral Kanin, commanding the mine defense, hoisted his flag on the *Rossiia*, while Captain Kolchak went along as the initiator and the soul of the whole expedition.

On December 30th (January 12th, western style) the detachment loaded mines at Ute and steamed out in a dead winter calm into a hazy Baltic. At first it was quite cold, but as we approached the shores of Germany the weather became much warmer. Maintaining a speed of eighteen knots we passed the Island of Gothland without encountering any ships. Soon after, the two light cruisers separated from us, as they were assigned to plant a mine field south of Stolpe Reef, while we continued on our southern course and soon passed the island of Öland, where we sighted a steamer in the distance and turned still further south in order to remain unnoticed.

We carried no lights at all and the men refrained from smoking on deck so as not to draw attention to our ship even by the tiny light of a cigarette.

In addition to our regular officers and Admiral Kanin's personal staff we carried on board two experts, sent by the Naval General Staff to decipher German wireless code signals, who were well

versed in the various discoveries in that field made since the capture of the *Magdeburg* signal books. Among them was my friend and former shipmate, Baron N. N. von Hoiningen Huene.

We passed Bornholm in complete darkness. Its lighthouse was functioning and on shore we could see lights in a number of houses. Our men, who did not know the destination of the ship, thought we were approaching an enemy city. Very soon our station began to receive wireless signals from German ships, and our decoding experts got to work. It appeared that a small German cruiser was anchored near the Arkona lighthouse in the island of Ruegen and the messages were of a routine nature. Apparently the Germans did not suspect that we were in their backyard. However, these signals made Admiral Kanin and our Captain doubtful as to the wisdom of proceeding further south to plant mines near the lighthouse where the German ship was apparently anchored. Of course, to engage in action with some two hundred mines on our upper deck was not a very pleasant prospect, and opinions veered toward changing our plans and planting the mine fields in a different place.

The Admiral and Podgurskii were sitting in the navigation room on the bridge, examining the chart. Radio men were constantly bringing in new messages sent by German ships. Kolchak had gone to take a nap in his cabin below. The Admiral sent for him and informed him of his doubts as to the advisability of steaming further on the course. In a few minutes Kolchak was on the bridge. I remember well his strong profile against the blue light of the navigation room. He listened carefully to the argument in favor of the change in plan and said: "I see no reason to make any change of plan. We must proceed to the appointed place."

The older officers raised no further objections and the *Rossiia* planted her mines on the exact spot near the Arkona designated in our plan of operations.

It took us about an hour to complete the planting of the mine field, which we performed at a speed of about eight knots. Shortly after midnight of New Year's Eve (Russian style) the work was done, and we turned back to Helsingfors. I had the midnight watch and was unable to share in the modest New Year celebrations, the festive spirit of which was enhanced by the elation caused by a successfully accomplished operation.

About an hour after we turned back on our course I noticed a small light right ahead of us. Upon observing that light carefully I found that we were not gaining on it. I inquired of our navigating

officer whether any routes of passenger steamer lines between Sweden and Germany were supposed to follow our course, and was informed that there were no such lines, as far as was known to our Intelligence Service. Then I came to the conclusion that we were following in the wake of a German ship, probably a cruiser, as the light did not move as much as it would on a destroyer, while her speed of about sixteen knots was more than that of freight ships in these days. Having made my mind up on that score, I sent word to the Captain, who soon joined me on the bridge. Coming as he did out of a brightly lighted room, he had to adjust himself to the darkness of the night, and at first could not see the light at all and berated me for seeing visions. However, I insisted on my theory that we were following a fairly large German man-of-war and he sent for the Admiral and Kolchak. At my suggestion we increased speed, called the men to the guns without sounding general quarters, so as not to make any unnecessary noise, and changed our course, leaving the other ship between ourselves and Bornholm, where we expected to be able to see clearly, against the glare of the lighthouse and the lights of the hamlet, what kind of ship we were overhauling.

To my great surprise, I saw that she had all lights out, so that we could see the silhouette of the ship quite distinctly. As far as I could make out she was a light cruiser of the *Gazelle* class. We had every possible advantage over her as we could see her clearly while we ourselves were in the darkness and showed no lights. Word was sent to the batteries to train the guns on the enemy ship—as we on the bridge considered her to be—and the range-finding station began to take distances.

There was a great deal of indecision on the bridge as to what to do next. There was a feeling that by attacking the German light cruiser we would divulge the fact that a Russian ship had visited the Western Baltic and that ultimately this would lead to the discovery of the mine field we had planted, so that all our labor would be in vain and the chance for such an expedition in the future would be very small. On the other hand, it seemed quite absurd to let that cruiser escape, there being no question that we could disable her by opening fire from close range before she would be in a position to reply, as she was unquestionably steaming under the impression that there was no enemy anywhere near.

“Look, sir, there’s an airship in tow of her!”

We all looked above the ship and saw a small light moving with her. I was not certain but that it was an optical illusion, caused by

small clouds rapidly drifting over the starry sky. Anyhow, at the moment we were all under the impression that there was some kind of lighter-than-air craft flying above the cruiser, probably connected with her by a tow rope.

Meanwhile the ship had reached the lighthouse of Bornholm and was obviously in territorial waters. The opportune moment was lost and it was too risky to attack her now, as that would result in an international incident, since Bornholm belonged to Denmark.

In the morning we were met by the *Bogatyr* and the *Oleg*, which had successfully planted their fields near the Stolpe Reef.

When we were returning to Helsingfors roadstead, I received a message that I had been appointed naval attaché to the United States of America and was to report immediately to the Naval General Staff at St. Petersburg for instructions. This message came like a bolt from the blue. While I had always regarded the work of an attaché as of extraordinary interest to any naval officer aspiring to occupy higher staff positions, I did not in the least want to go to America during the war. The years I had spent on board the *Rossiia* made me feel that she was my home and that her Wardroom contained some of my best friends.

As soon as we had moored the ship to our usual buoy, I went over the ice (the harbor was already frozen) to see Admiral Leskov, who commanded our cruiser squadron, and ask him to intercede with Admiral von Essen to leave me on board the *Rossiia*. The Admiral received me very pleasantly, but strongly advised me to accept the appointment.

"This is a very rare chance for an officer of your seniority to occupy a post of such importance. You will obtain most valuable experience while in America and if you perform your duties in a manner satisfactory to the Naval General Staff it will always be a feather in your cap. Don't turn it down! There are plenty of watch lieutenants in the fleet, but only very few who can be sent to the Embassy in Washington."

Upon returning to the ship I told my faithful seaman-servant Egorov to pack all my belongings and get ready to take them to the railway station. Egorov nearly wept, and begged me to take him with me to America, which unfortunately I was not in a position to do.

After a farewell luncheon given me by the Wardroom I said goodbye to my friends, who presented me with a beautiful cigarette case, which, by the way, is about the only piece of silver I did not lose during the Revolution. Then I went to take leave of the seamen of

my batteries. They were all lined up near their guns, and I made the rounds, saying a few words to those of them I knew best. It was really a very sad parting as I had come to love my job and my men on board the *Rossia*.

The next morning I was at the Naval General Staff, where I met Commander Mishtovt, who had been appointed to proceed to Washington to relieve Captain Vasiliev, our naval attaché, who was seriously ill and had sent a very pathetic cable: "Send relief without delay, otherwise will be too late." I was made assistant naval attaché and spent a couple of days in the several divisions of the Naval General Staff receiving various instructions pertaining to my new duties and familiarizing myself with the codes used by the naval attachés.

A few days later Mishtovt and I were traveling through Norway and embarked on an Anchor liner for New York. Before leaving St. Petersburg I told the head of the Foreign Department of the Staff that I did not want to remain abroad for more than one year and would like to be replaced, so as to be able to return to the fleet.

And so came to an end the first spell of my active service.

A few months later I learned that the German light cruiser *Gazelle* and another smaller ship were blown up on the mine field planted by the *Rossia*, but that the *Gazelle* had managed to limp into port.

TSAR'S EMBASSY

Washington

IURIH BAKHMETEV—Jack to his friends, who were as numerous as his enemies—a grand seigneur of the old school, ruled over the large ornate building of the Embassy in Washington. The Emperor told Mishtovt, my chief, at Tsarskoie Selo, just before we both started for America: "You are going to work under a real man, not a mere diplomat. There isn't anyone in our diplomatic service like him."

I had met him the year before, when the *Rossia* was at Newport News, but had had little opportunity to get to know him. A sub-lieutenant in a large ship is not a very important cog. My impressions were limited to the memory of a pair of braided trousers that stuck out rather incongruously from beneath his black overcoat, topped by a wrinkled Tatar face under a befeathered cocked hat.

At breakfast at the late naval attaché's house I heard from his widow quite a few of Bakhmetev's current Washington anecdotes. The one I particularly remember dealt with William Jennings Bryan, then secretary of state. According to the story, that illustrious protagonist of cheap money was in the habit of receiving foreign diplomats with both his feet stretched out luxuriously on top of his desk. As Washington wits had it, Mr. Bryan sent for Bakhmetev to discuss some important question concerning the war, and after a cordial greeting settled himself comfortably in his chair and assumed his favorite posture. Bakhmetev, seated at the opposite side of the desk, immediately followed his host's example and placed both his beautifully shod feet on the secretarial desk. The Great Commoner was considerably taken aback by this rather unexpected diplomatic move and cautiously withdrew one of his feet from the polished surface of

the desk. Bakhmetev followed suit. Then the secretary of state removed his other foot, and assumed a more formal pose.

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A tall Cossack in a white *cherkesska* and blue *beshtmet* threw open the heavy door of the Russian Embassy. The first object I observed upon entering the vast hall was a table with more than a dozen felt hats of every shade. The Ambassador had a hat to suit every mood and to match every coat—one of his numerous idiosyncrasies.

Bakhmetev received Mishtovt and me in the small salon with white and red furniture. He was a most informal person and chatted with me very pleasantly, commenting upon his visit the year before on board the *Rossia* and asking for news of the Captain and the other officers he had met.

"You will have to call on President Wilson. He is a stiff old school-master. You will not get much change out of him. A very pedantic fellow and has a tremendous opinion of himself. However, call you must, and I shall go along with you."

A few minutes later I was introduced to Madame Bakhmetev. She was a Miss Beale, a Philadelphian of the old patrician family so long resident in that city. She was exceedingly charming to me, and asked me to come and lunch at the Embassy any day, when I had no engagements for the midday meal.

"Just call up the *maitre d'hôtel* and tell him to add a cover for you. I shall be very angry with you if you don't come very often."

Madame Bakhmetev's appearance was quite extraordinary. She was small and plump, had a prominent reddish nose and wore a reddish wig. She was very fond of precious stones and on formal occasions wore a tiara of huge beryls. She was one of the most kind-hearted and considerate persons I have ever known, and a staunch Russian patriot, in spite of her American origin. A day or two later I drove with Bakhmetev in his huge blue limousine, with a uniformed Cossack acting as footman, to the White House.

The President met us at his desk. He was formally garbed in a cutaway and gray striped trousers.

Bakhmetev introduced my chief and then me. The President had very little to say to us. He asked whether I played golf, and suggested the Chevy Chase Club as quite a good place for a game. He seemed to me ill at ease and lacking in social polish. He impressed me as very different from my idea of a typical American statesman. Probably the President was very bored to have to waste a few minutes of his

time on a couple of Russians in gold-braided uniforms, introduced by the sharp-tongued Ambassador of the Tsar.

What surprised me was his lack of interest in our war experience. I thought that I was probably the first man introduced to him who had had active experience in the Great War. I assumed that the Navy Department had informed the President of this and expected that he would ask a few questions on the war. In this I was disappointed. The war was never mentioned.

* * * * *

The first weeks of work at the Embassy were very dull, but not very strenuous. My chief invited me to live with him at the house previously occupied by Captain Vasiliev, his predecessor, who had died a few days after our landing at New York. Denis, a Russian emigrant, was our butler. He is now doorman at the Mayflower Hotel at Washington, and I often see his smiling face when I pass the portals of that hostelry. His wife cooked for us, feeding us on heavy Russian food which I, at least, never found to my taste.

My work at the outset consisted largely of ciphering and deciphering cables to and from the Naval General Staff, drafting some of these cables and handling the major part of the English language correspondence, which was rapidly increasing in volume, as American business men began to realize that untold wealth was in store for them in making munitions and selling all kinds of supplies to the belligerents. The naval attaché's office did not include at that time a secretary or stenographer of any kind. Captain Vasiliev's widow was accustomed to help her husband in all routine work, and was familiar with ciphers, typing, and bookkeeping. She was a great help to my chief during the few weeks she stayed in Washington prior to sailing for Russia to take her husband's body for burial in his native soil.

My stay in Washington was too short to permit me to form any lasting friendships in the American capital. There were, however, several people whom I learned to know and respect. Foremost among these was Captain Oliver, U.S.N., then at the head of the Naval Intelligence Division. An upright gentleman he was, with a fine sense of humor, personifying to me the best type of American naval officer. I remember one incident on the eve of my departure from the United States, which is characteristic of the man who was later the first governor of the Virgin Islands. His rule is still thought of as the golden age of the American administration, which at the

moment is not very popular with the sable-hued wards of the United States in those islands.

I had gone to the Army and Navy Building to pay my respects to Secretary Daniels and to the ranking officers of the Department, since I was about to return to Russia on active service. Secretary Daniels received me in a very jovial mood, and with the breezy manner of a backwoods politician patted me patronizingly on the epaulette, which in those days in Russia was considered a very serious insult.

"What are you going back to Russia for, my boy? Don't you like the States well enough?"

"My country is at war, Mr. Secretary, as you know, and I am too young to fill the Embassy job throughout its duration. I am returning to help defend my country."

"Oh, piffle! The war will be over before you get home."

By this time I was thoroughly angry at Daniels and was fully sharing the feelings of my American naval friends toward him.

"I am afraid, Mr. Secretary, that you do not know what you are talking about. I firmly believe that before the war is over this country of yours will be in it."

Thereupon the interview came to a rather abrupt conclusion. Oliver signaled me to follow him to his room, and after closing the door said: "I'm delighted you told that old fool where to get off. I want you to go back to Russia and tell your friends there that we are in sympathy with them in this struggle."

In Washington society the cleavage between political sympathies became deeper and deeper. There were soon two definite groups—pro-German and pro-Ally.

I had the impression at the time that Bakhmetev did not take this too seriously. At least not as seriously as his British and French colleagues. I remember that once when I accepted an invitation to dinner from a New Jersey society leader who was known for her German sympathies and there ran into the secretary of the German Embassy, Bakhmetev was not much ruffled and said rather sharply to an officious member of the Embassy staff who spoke to him about it: "I much prefer my young attachés to make friends with such people as the X.'s of New Jersey, rather than with the various *parvenus* who are trying to make social capital out of their alleged pro-Ally sympathies."

Madame Bakhmetev, however, had no sense of humor on this score. Any friend of hers who asked a German or an Austrian to her house became immediately a bitter enemy.

As I am trying to sum up my impressions of Washington, I see beautiful avenues of trees, stately buildings, and the unhurried leisurely life of pre-war society. At that time Washington reminded one of a German provincial capital. It was *gemütlich* and far from exciting. It did not reflect the life of industrial America and had, perhaps, more in common with the South than is true today.

My work at the Embassy gradually became more and more that of a purchasing agent of ammunition and other supplies, than that of a naval attaché. Captain Mishtovt and I were daily receiving lengthy cables from St. Petersburg asking us to buy this or that, or to quote prices and dates of delivery for some article or other.

Captain Vasiliev, the late naval attaché, was a man of very wide views and had apparently foreseen the scope and duration of the war as well as the rôle of the United States in supplying munitions and other material to the belligerents. During the first few weeks of the conflict he recommended to our Government that an option be taken for the duration of the war on the output of the DuPont powder works, and that a similar option be taken on the Bethlehem Steel output of guns and shells. He was discouraged by the Government, the latter apparently still thinking in terms of a relatively short war and believing that the supplies accumulated before it, plus the output of the Russian war industry, would suffice.

Nevertheless the Russian Government was gradually beginning to look more and more to America for military supplies in spite of the difficulty of financing their purchases in the United States.

The army sent out ordnance and engineering experts to America in fairly large numbers, and ultimately a large Military Supply Committee, presided over by a general, was established in New York with headquarters in the Flatiron Building.

The navy contented itself with strengthening the naval attaché's staff by naval engineers, aviation experts, and civil engineers. An office force recruited locally in New York helped to handle the details of accounting and correspondence and other office routine. All the purchasing of naval supplies in America remained thus in the hands of the naval attaché, while the military attaché was relieved of that work by the Military Supply Mission.

In other words, Commander Mishtovt and I had, willy-nilly, to become American business men and learn the ABC of purchasing, inspecting, shipping and, worst of all, keeping track of all these shipments anywhere between New York and Vladivostok or Archangel.

This trend was not clear to us in the spring of 1915, however, and

when the Embassy moved to its summer residence in Newport, Captain Mishtovt and I went with the Ambassador and took a house in Catherine Street within stone's throw of the Reading Room Club. The two Russian servants we inherited from Vasiliev and the seaman-servant brought by Mishtovt from Russia took charge of our new quarters and continued to feed us on Russian *bortsch*.

Life at Newport did not fit in at all with the rapidly increasing volume of work that was piling up on our desks. I believe that Commander Mishtovt and I hold the unique record of having worked hard while living amongst the Newport summer colony. This led to incongruous situations. Very often, upon returning from a dinner party, we had to change back into our working clothes and go on with our decoding and correspondence till the small hours of the morning. And then, about seven, a friend would toot his or her horn under our windows and invite us to join in a morning set of tennis before breakfast.

Newport was a great surprise to me. The whole life ran contrary to the idea I had formed of America. The exclusiveness and the endless, idle round of social life that filled the day to overflowing were a source of constant wonder to me. I had never dreamed that there existed anything like it in America. There being only very few single men available during the week days, all the Embassy attachés were showered with invitations for luncheons, teas, dinners, and dances. Newport, in one sense, was a small place, and one could not refuse these invitations under pretext of another engagement, as one's would-be hostess would promptly find out that one had lied, which might have jeopardized the Embassy's popularity and standing. Many a time, tired and sleepy, I had to make the social rounds, dreading the long hours of decoding and typing ahead of me after the party was over.

At one of the larger dinners given by a leading Newport hostess, I was asked, together with a small group of intimate friends of the lady of the house, to stay on after the rest of the guests had left. We settled down comfortably before the fireplace of the small salon on cushions and rugs, and the hostess addressed me: "We're all friends here. This is my most intimate circle. Do tell us what you know about Rasputin."

Unbelievable as it may sound today, I had never heard that name until then. My service abroad and my absorption in my work on board ships in Russian waters had kept me far from the gossiping circles of St. Petersburg. Furthermore, my father took his duties as a

servant of the Crown very seriously and at our table at home any tittle-tattle about matters involving the Imperial Family was unthinkable.

As the name did not mean anything to me, I answered: "I'm very sorry, Madam. I haven't the faintest idea who this Rasputin may be. Judging by the name, he is probably a Siberian peasant. I have never lived in Siberia and am not, therefore, in a position to know a great deal about Siberian affairs and people."

The whole group stared at me in utter astonishment. After a few moments' silence, Mrs. X., my hostess, said with some annoyance: "You really don't need to be so frightfully discreet! As I said, we are among friends and anything discussed will not go any further."

It was my turn to be surprised.

"Mrs. X., you are really very much mistaken. I know nothing of the fellow. This is the first time I've heard his name!"

Unable to restrain her temper any longer, Mrs. X. exclaimed, "Then you'd better speak to Jack Bakhmetev tomorrow and ask him to tell you about Rasputin. You'll learn something, I assure you."

The party broke up and I went home wondering at this strange happening and at the perversity of the Newport socialites in showing such interest in a Siberian peasant.

The next morning, immediately after breakfast, I went to see the Ambassador and, having related the incident of the night before, asked him who Rasputin was. Never in my life have I seen Bakhmetev laugh as long and as heartily as he did that morning. Finally he managed to say, between loud guffaws, "The less you know about Rasputin, the better for you!"

Later one of the Embassy secretaries enlightened me as to the reason of Newport's interest in the Siberian peasant. I must say I was as deeply shocked by that information as by anything I had ever heard. I simply could not reconcile what I had heard with my ideas about the Imperial Family and the conduct of state affairs.

All this may sound strange in this year of grace, but on the other hand I managed to live in Moscow for several months in 1921 without ever having heard Stalin's name.

From time to time Newport was invaded by representatives of various missions that began to arrive in America in large numbers. Thus we were visited by a group of railroad engineers who came to New York to buy rolling stock for Russian railroads. Newport at the time was not exactly a place where strangers could find comfortable accommodation at a moment's notice, and at least in one

instance one of the Russian visitors, an eminent biologist, had to spend the night on a bench in a public park, narrowly escaping being taken in for vagrancy, and made his appearance at the temporary Chancellery of the Embassy with a day's stubble on his chin and without even having changed his collar, to the great amusement of the secretaries.

Someone ought to write the history of the munitions traffic in the United States during the war, not from the angle of anti-war propaganda or baiting the favorite victim of the day—the American capitalist—but merely from the angle of the human side of the story and the truly inexhaustible fund of anecdotes about these strange days, when billions of dollars were being spent in the United States by Allied missions of all kinds. It may encourage some budding historian to make it the subject of his Ph.D. dissertation if I offer a few samples of what I saw while in America in 1915-16.

A good many of the orders the Russian naval attaché's office had to place had various strings attached to them. Usually contracts in that category were the outcome of the solicitation of some munition broker at Petrograd who drew before the bedazzled eyes of the officials of the Ministry of the Navy a brightly colored and highly optimistic picture of the volume of production, quality of material, and promptness of delivery of some firm in America he represented or purported to represent.

The Russian bureaucracy, including that of the navy, was utterly ignorant of the conditions prevailing in the American industry and its productive capacity in war materials. It became thus an easy prey to the various adventurers in striped trousers and well-tailored cutaways supplied with engraved calling cards who filled the antechambers of the various departments interested in obtaining supplies abroad. Some of these gentry represented bona fide organizations and were able to deliver the goods they were advertising. Others were mere brokers trying to obtain an order first and later find some concern with whom to place it. There was also a third category of munition salesmen, representing well-known European munition brokers who had some faint idea of American industry and stood between the first and the second group as to reliability and efficiency.

To illustrate I shall cite an example or two from my own experience.

One day in the early fall of 1915, Mishtovt received a cable asking us to place with a certain firm in Philadelphia a large order, running into millions of dollars, for some shell fuses. My chief asked me

whether I knew of that firm and berated me roundly when I admitted my complete ignorance as to its standing or even its existence.

"I wonder," said he, "how long it's going to take you to learn something about the American munition industry. This seems to be an important firm located practically next door to our office, and you admit you've never heard of it. And yet it's a well-known fact that there are only very few good fuse makers in the United States!"

This reprimand infuriated me and I left Mishtovt's room in high dudgeon.

Later he sent for one of the ordnance inspectors of the army who was supposed to be an expert on shells and fuses, and asked him the same question. I do not recall now the exact tenor of their conversation, but the inspector ultimately went to Philadelphia and reported that he had visited the office of the concern and that everything seemed to be in order.

When Mishtovt pressed him for details of the plant and its production, the inspector failed, to our surprise, to give any satisfactory answer. After he had left we were both under the impression that something was amiss. So Mishtovt said: "I think you'd better go to Philadelphia and have a look at these people. I can't make head or tail of what our army friend says."

As I was still smarting under the lash of Mishtovt's remarks, I retorted: "I really don't see why *I* should go. After all, my knowledge of the fuse industry in America is negligible and my technical equipment—that of a watch lieutenant—cannot be compared with that of your expert who has more degrees and diplomas in metallurgy and chemistry than a dog has fleas!"

Nevertheless, the next day found me on my way to Philadelphia. At the address given in the cable I found an office consisting of one big room with several desks along its walls and a large photograph of a naval gun as its chief adornment. Four gentlemen, who somehow looked to me very much alike, dressed in blue serge double-breasted suits, were sitting at the desks and greeted me effusively.

"We were so glad to have had the visit of your ordnance expert," said the tallest of them, who appeared to be the head of the concern. "He is such a pleasant fellow. Although he doesn't seem to know much of our language we spent a delightful day with him. Would you like a drink?"

Answering in the negative as to the drink, I asked them who was their technical expert on fuses. The tall gentleman introduced a

shorter one. I asked the latter whether he would mind telling me something about his experience in making fuses. He assented.

"Where did you get your training in manufacturing fuses?"

"At the Bethlehem Steel," said he, and pointed with obvious pride at the photograph of the gun on the wall.

"In what department did you work there?"

"In the gun-casting department, sir, for a number of years."

This answer set me wondering. Apparently in this whole group there was not a single person who actually had had any experience in making fuses. Since the process of their manufacture was quite complicated, it became clear to me that something was very far wrong.

"The fuse is of course fired out of the gun with the shell it belongs to," said I, "but it does not necessarily follow that a person who has built guns can successfully manufacture fuses of the type used in our navy."

The tall gentleman remarked that this was a detail which would be attended to later, and offered to take me out for lunch. By that time I was thoroughly angry, realizing that these people thought they could trade with the Russians on the same basis as their ancestors had perhaps trafficked with the Guinea blacks or some benighted savages in the Solomon Islands. So I declined the lunch but said I would like to see a blueprint of the factory and have one of them explain to me their methods of production. After a great deal of searching in the drawers of the desks a dusty blueprint was produced. Glancing at it, I saw that it was merely an architect's sketch and that it could not possibly serve as a guide in studying the sequence of the production of fuses.

"Very well, gentlemen; now let's go and see your plant."

Numerous objections were raised, mingled with reiterated offers of lunch. Ultimately seeing that I could not be budged, they all took their hats off the peg and led me to a large car parked at the curb opposite the office.

After a fairly long drive through the dreary wastes of North Philadelphia we reached a large empty lot with a fence around it enclosing a substantial heap of old bricks and other rubbish.

The tall gentleman assumed the posture of a Barnum showing off his best elephant.

"This is the location, sir, where our plant will be erected as soon as the contract is signed."

The contract, by the way, called for a payment of twenty-five percent of the total on the day of signing.

"Thank you very much, gentlemen. Now will you kindly take me to the North Philadelphia station? I am very anxious to make the one o'clock train to New York."

All four became extremely agitated, waving their hands in the air and saying that it was not possible to let me go without lunch, that they would like to talk to me some more and give me some further details of their plans, that my abrupt departure was an insult, etc., etc. To which I replied that if they could not take me to the station, I could call a taxicab from the nearest cigar store.

The order, of course, was not placed. We dispatched a pretty sarcastic cable to the Naval General Staff about the whole incident. Be it said, the order had originated through a well-known Danish munition broker.

Herewith another example, involving a free-lance munition salesman:

Mishtovt and I were sitting in our office when a corpulent gentleman in carefully creased pearl-gray striped trousers and a London-made cutaway walked in and announced himself as Mr. Y. of London, handing to us a letter from one of the technical departments of the Ministry of the Navy.

We had already some information regarding the order this man was interested in. It concerned several million pounds of smokeless powder for the heavy naval and coast-defense guns. In our opinion, only the DuPonts could handle such an order in a satisfactory manner and maintain reasonable dates of delivery. However, the Ministry of the Navy suggested that we deal with the gentleman in the pearl-gray trousers and had already entered into a preliminary contractual agreement with him. The only thing that was missing was Mishtovt's countersignature on that contract.

Apparently our visitor did not expect any trouble when he breezed into our office and greeted us affably and in a slightly patronizing manner.

"Just a small formality, Captain Mishtovt; that of affixing your signature to this paper. Then the contract will be in order and I shall expect to receive your cheque for twenty-five percent of the total sum involved."

Mishtovt, however, did not regard the matter from a merely formal viewpoint. We both knew well that the navy needed that pow-

der badly, and should the contractor fail to deliver it in accordance with specifications our ships might be short of ammunition.

My chief, therefore, asked Mr. Y. whether he had ever manufactured powder before. The indignant answer that this question had nothing to do with the contract was followed by another question: "With whom would you place the order?"

At first our visitor balked at the question. Only Mishtovt's insistence led him to name a small concern that we knew was not in a position to deliver the powder of the specifications required and in the time stipulated.

Then Mishtovt said that he was not prepared at that time to affix his signature to the contract and that he would give a definite answer in the course of a few days, after investigating the matter more thoroughly. Our visitor was most indignant and said that he would cable the Ministry protesting against our dilatory tactics.

As soon as he had left, Mishtovt got in touch with one of the bankers with whom we had dealings and asked him to find out about the financial and general business standing of Mr. Y.

The next morning we were advised that Mr. Y.'s total wealth consisted of seven hundred dollars on deposit with one of the New York banks and that he had no business standing whatsoever. Within fifteen minutes a cable was dispatched to the Ministry advising our views that the order should not be placed with Mr. Y. and suggesting instead a contract with DuPont and giving briefly our reasons. A few hours later we had before us a lengthy cable from the Technical Department which had entered into the preliminary contract with Mr. Y., berating us for our dilatory way of carrying out their instructions and requesting Mishtovt to complete the contract without further delay.

Thereupon we held a council of war, the outcome of which was a jointly signed cable to the Minister of the Navy himself, offering our resignation because of our inability to carry out instructions which we both considered detrimental to the navy's interests. Before we had time to say Jack Robinson—or whatever the modern equivalent of that may be—we had a cable from the Technical Department involved, asking us why we had not yet placed the contract with DuPont!

From the very first day of our arrival in New York, Captain Mishtovt and I were besieged by a horde of munition salesmen, who crowded into our rooms at the Plaza Hotel within ten minutes after

we had landed from the *Tuscania*. Several dapper, well-dressed young men, brandishing cards and credentials from the firms they represented, pressed upon us invitations to dine, go to the opera, go to Rector's and goodness only knows where. Mishtovt was enraged, and answered all these offers with the scantiest possible courtesy, and we then and there made a rule that we would not accept any invitations for meals or entertainment of any kind from people with whom we had business dealings in New York. And this rule stood us in good stead during the first few months of our work in America.

As all these experiences had put me very much on my guard, I was utterly astonished when, at a dinner given by a leading Newport hostess, my neighbor on the right, a most attractive and very handsome woman, began to tell me at dinner about the various orders we had placed in America. I was simply petrified by the accuracy of her information and the wealth of detail at her command. As I had not heard her name when I was introduced before dinner and my knowledge of Newport society was still very scanty, I could not possibly think who the lady might be and how she had obtained her information. In making various guesses I even began to suspect the reliability of our file clerk. By the time we had reached the dessert I was convinced that my charming table companion was an intelligence service agent, as she actually knew practically every large order that our office had placed since Mishtovt and I had arrived in the United States.

At that stage my curiosity got the better of my manners and I told the lady that I had failed to catch her name, and asked bluntly who she was.

"I'm your landlady, Mrs. Z.," said she. Then only did I realize that she was the wife of one of the leading officials of the bank with whom we had had most of our financial dealings!

The endless round of entertainments during the summer at Newport did at least one thing for me. It cured me of any social ambitions I may ever have had. At that early stage, I decided that as a constant diet this sort of life was the most boring imaginable. However, not all life at Newport was a bore. Far from it. There were several charming and clever people whose friendship went far to make me understand the sterling qualities of the American character, and the quiet dignity and keen intellectual interest of these New Englanders, New Yorkers, and Pennsylvanians made that summer at Newport an interesting experience. Some of these friendships have outlasted the war and the Russian Revolution, and it is always a great pleasure to

me, in my present state of evolution, to see these old Newport friends still secure in their position and confidently looking upon the future of America and of the American ideal. Unfortunately, however, they were not representative of Newport society as a whole.

DESTROYERS IN ACTION

THE work at the Embassy was quite absorbing and interesting. The old Ambassador and my colleagues were most kind to me, while my new American friends spoiled me by their attention and hospitality. But I could not forget that I was a naval officer and not a professional diplomat and that my place was on the bridge of a ship and not in a chancellery. So I decided to tear myself from the flesh-pots of New York and return to the more rigorous life of the navy.

In the spring of 1916 I asked the Naval General Staff to relieve me of my duties at the Embassy and permit me to rejoin the Baltic Fleet. Meanwhile my friend Baron George Taube wrote from the *Variag* suggesting that I apply for a transfer to the Naval Guards Regiment, that famous amphibian unit of the Imperial Guards which manned several men-of-war, including the *Variag*, and had also a battalion serving at the front. Taube told me that several of my friends in the Guards had brought up my name for nomination and that I was considered a desirable candidate because of my former duties with the Executive Petty Officers' School of the Baltic Fleet where for more than two years I had been responsible for the training of the Naval Guardsmen. Taube's proposal appealed to me, as the discipline of the Naval Guards was very similar to that of the Petty Officers' School and some of my best friends had joined the Regiment shortly before the war. I decided, however, to postpone the decision until my return to St. Petersburg.

My chief, Commander Mishtovt, sympathized with my desire to reënter active service and with his help I obtained permission to return to Russia.

With the date of my departure came the realization that I had already taken root in American soil and that leaving New York meant more than merely a change of habitat. My last duty in America was the inspection of a steam yacht which the Russian Government

was interested in purchasing for patrol work in the White Sea. I went down to Old Point Comfort, as the yacht was lying at Hampton Roads. The inspection did not take a great deal of my time since the ship was obviously too slow for any useful patrolling. On completing the job I called up the Joe Weavers at Newport News to say good-bye. They were the first American family I had come to know well when the *Rossiia* came to Newport News for engine repairs in the spring of 1914. I considered them my oldest friends on the New Continent. Joe was not at home and I spoke to his wife, telling her I was going to Russia and wanted to take my leave of the Weaver family. We bantered back and forth, and I was commissioned to carry all kinds of good wishes to the officers of the *Rossiia* who had been the Weavers' guests in 1914. Mrs. Weaver asked me jestingly not to get into any trouble if I could help it, and I wound up by inviting them to come over to Russia after the war, so that I could show them something of St. Petersburg night life.

It was a warm balmy night and I went down to the water's edge and sat on the sand for an hour or so, watching the bright lights of the ships riding at anchor and the gaily illuminated ferry boats slipping into Norfolk. For once I was in a meditative mood, and that peaceful night, the smell of the sea, the clear-voiced strokes of the ships' bells brought back to me my pre-war cruises in southern waters and the happy carefree life of those days. I suddenly felt that I was saying good-bye to my youth and that never again should I recapture the halcyon mood of these Caribbean winters.

The *Tsaritsa*, a small vessel of the Russian-American Line, was about to weigh anchor. My chief and several friends came to speed me on my way.

The head of the Russian Supply Mission in America, General Sapozhnikov, came on board to see off one of the passengers. He espied me and came to shake hands. The General performed the ritual in the approved fashion, saying that he was sorry to see me leave as I had done such good work, and making a few further remarks suitable to such occasions. But I was in no mood for inane compliments and remarked rather rudely that I was surprised that he should pass an opinion as to my service in America, since I had not had the honor of serving under him. This took the wind out of the General's sails, and terminated his effusions.

My rudeness was not merely a matter of a hangover after a very generous libation the night before at the Domino Club, where Prince Paolo Trubetskoi and his wife had given me a farewell party. I

considered that General Sapozhnikov, excellent chemist and able artillery officer though he was, had done a great deal toward lowering Russian prestige in the United States by his entire lack of *savoir faire*, his outrageous nepotism, and his friendships with some of the shadiest characters among the munitions crowd. The only thing I could do about it was to be rude to him. And rude I was.

A few minutes later the round, smiling face of the presiding genius of the passenger agency of the Russian-American Line, Max Straus, hove in sight. Max Straus was a character. Friend and adviser of hundreds of Russians in New York, a shrewd business man, in whose office hundreds of threads crossed and recrossed, he made himself indispensable to the Russian Consulate, and many a member of the Russian Mission staff sought his advice on business matters. He greeted me in his jovial way: "The best of everything to you, Lieutenant, and I hope to see you an admiral after the war!" I teased him about the small number of passengers, telling him I would report to the Government in Petrograd that he was neglecting his job. By way of answer he pointed to the red flag at the masthead. The meaning of the gesture was plain enough. The *Tsaritsa*, full of explosives, shells, cartridges, and other implements of war, was not a very tempting passenger liner in those days.

By the time the liner was nosing her way into the open sea, I had met all the passengers in the First Class, the Captain, his officers, and even the radio men. The latter were naval ratings temporarily assigned to the *Tsaritsa* by the Baltic Fleet. Among the passengers was an attractive couple from Philadelphia. The husband was a medical man who was serving in the Russian army in the capacity of regimental surgeon with one of the cavalry regiments. We drifted together even before the shores of Long Island were out of sight and spent most of the time on board in each other's company, exchanging books and discussing everything under the sun.

Our journey was approaching its end and we were nearing the shores of Murmansk in the extreme north of Russia. I was sitting in my deck-chair, warming myself in the tepid northern sunshine and lazily turning the pages of *Leaves of Grass*. One of Whitman's lines suddenly brought back to me in a vivid flash the conversation I had had the day before sailing while lunching with my friend Thomas Ashley Sparks. While we were sipping our brandies, he suddenly looked at me thoughtfully and made a startling remark.

"My dear lad, something tells me that by the time this war is over

you'll be minus a job and stripped of any worldly possessions you may now have."

This sounded to me so completely out of touch with the realities of the situation, that I could not help laughing out loud. "You're a real Cassandra. However, the fulfilment of that prophecy doesn't strike me as very probable. Supposing you're right as to the first part. I lose my job in the navy. That wouldn't be so calamitous, although I love the sea and prefer my naval career to any other. Russia is not a highly competitive country in so far as jobs are concerned. I should be able to pick up a position in one of the civil services, easily enough, or in business, for that matter. As to my worldly possessions—or rather my family's, my own being practically non-existent—that sounds rather improbable. They are a conservative lot and are not even spending their income. What kind of cataclysm do you expect that would lose me my job and my money?"

"That I don't know. It's just a feeling I have, as I look at you."

"And what, pray, do you suggest I do about it?"

"Well, if it happens, you'd better get in touch with me and ask me for a job. I kind of like you and possibly I shall be able to find a berth for you then. Will you promise me to do this?"

I said I would, and jestingly drank to my future utter degradation and my grave in the potter's field.

On this we parted.

"A penny for your thoughts!"

Dr. G. ensconced himself in the chair next to mine: "How many millions of good American money are you taking with you from these benighted States of ours? Surely all these munition contracts meant something to you personally. As a French government inspector friend of mine told me the other day in Chicago: '*Nous voulons être soignés*,' and I guess you were *soigné* too, all right!"

"Well, G., if you really think all Russians are grafters, why do you risk your life for them in your Russian cavalry regiment?"

"I know nothing of that proposition in general, but what I do know is that you're a blasted fool if you're going home empty-handed. With so much loose money flying about because of these war contracts, someone's going to fill his pockets. So why not you? Besides, methinks your country is getting sort of unsafe for people of your class. Don't you hear any rumblings yourself?"

"G., you apparently don't know what risks you're taking, talking

like that to a Russian naval officer, particularly as you are in the Russian military service yourself. You're overlooking the old dueling code which is still an actuality in Russia, rumblings or no rumblings."

"Now, listen, you know I didn't mean to offend you. I thought you'd lived in America long enough to learn something about our way of being funny. But seriously, now, are your people so fabulously rich that you can afford to disregard all these attractive commissions?"

This persistence amused me and I could not help laughing at Dr. G.'s idea of grabbing at fortune's forelock. Then I patiently explained to him that I came from a family with certain traditions, and that we Russians, by and large, believed that our Services were as honest, if not more so, than most European Services and that even Russian Prime Ministers and Ministers of Finance retired from the service without having accumulated any private means. Dr. G. listened politely, but I thought I saw a glimmer of doubt behind his eyeglasses.

This reference to "rumblings" in some way clicked in my mind with the prophecy at Delmonico's. I saw what it really meant. In the opinion of my friend as well as in that of Dr. G., the ship of the Russian state was sinking and its crew was likely to go under. It was the first time that I had seriously thought of such a contingency. True, we youngsters had often spoken of the coming revolution which some of us even considered unavoidable. However, very few of my group took all this talk very seriously. Revolution meant to them a change of the reigning monarch, perhaps a real constitution on the English pattern. But the complete overthrow of the entire governmental machine, confiscation of property—that seemed absurd, utterly impossible.

As I was ruminating on these somewhat gloomy subjects, the senior radio man dashed out of the radio room and thrust into my lap several sheets of penciled manuscript.

"Apparently a great sea battle is going on in the North Sea. My German is not good enough to make out the sense of the message. Will you lend a hand?"

I apologized to G. and went into the wireless room. The radio men had really done quite a good job, considering their lack of German. I had no difficulty in reconstructing the entire message. At first I was simply staggered by the news it contained. The losses of the British Cruiser Squadrons seemed appalling when compared with the ships lost by the German *Hochseeflotte*. I reconstructed the pattern of the battle on a chart as well as I could, and soon the British mes-

sages helped to clarify the situation. So much was obvious at the time: The Germans had won a tactical victory but had not succeeded in turning the tables on the British as far as the strategical position was concerned.

Unpleasant, very unpleasant, for the British and their allies, particularly if some of the German cruisers had managed to escape out of the North Sea during the action and were by now roaming the seven seas, but otherwise without any serious effect on the course of the war. At least it did not make it any worse, as long as the British seemed to be satisfied with their position of defense and of maintaining Admiral Jellicoe's fleet as a force in being.

The radio men were deeply interested in these messages and plied me with questions as to the real meaning of the outcome of the battle—the Battle of Jutland, as it is known today.

"This is the greatest sea battle since Trafalgar, sir," remarked the stocky Ponomarev. "Did the British win it?"

I told him that strategically it was a British victory. Ponomarev's doubts, however, were obviously not entirely allayed, and I spent some time with the radio men explaining to them the course of naval warfare since 1914.

As it happened, our radio records were the first authentic description of the great sea battle that reached the officers of the British mine-sweepers on the Murmansk coast. When the *Tsaritsa* fell in with the British Flotilla I was still in bed. A R.N.R. Lieutenant came into my room early in the morning and told me that they understood that our radio men had intercepted radio messages to the effect that some of the large British ships were sunk in a battle off the Danish coast.

"That's all tommyrot. Just another piece of German propaganda. Have you a complete translation of the German message about the battle?"

When I traced on a piece of paper the general scheme of the battle as well as I could reconstruct it from the radio messages, and listed for him the losses of both fleets, the British officer clenched his fists.

"Impossible! I don't believe it—it's all a German lie!" and he left my room without shaking hands with me.

Upon arrival at St. Petersburg, I went to report to the Minister of the Navy, Admiral Grigorovich. His study in the stately ochre and white Admiralty building was an imposing room of generous proportions. The Admiral was sitting at a large desk in the corner of the room opposite the entrance. I made my way across the slippery sur-

face of the impeccably polished parquet floor to the desk, my cap, sword, and gloves in hand, trying not to slip.

The huge figure of the gray-haired Admiral who re-created the Russian navy after the Russo-Japanese War rose and towered over the desk as he accepted my formal report.

Grigorovich's piercing eyes looked at me from beneath the shaggy eyebrows. "What the devil are you doing back here? Did you think the navy was so short of watch lieutenants that you had to rush back all the way from Washington, where you were doing useful work?"

This unexpected rebuff took me aback and I felt my face turn crimson.

"Sir, for men of my age an embassy is not the right place in war-time. I am anxious to return to the Baltic Fleet and hope that Your Excellency has no objection."

"You can go to hell, or anywhere else you like, as far as I'm concerned. I understand, however, that the Naval General Staff have some plans for you, as they have excellent reports about your work at the Embassy."

On leaving Grigorovich I went to pay my respects to Admiral Rusin, chief of the Naval General Staff. He received me very pleasantly and said I had been recommended by the Chief of the Foreign Division for appointment as assistant director of that division. As this was a position usually given to officers considerably senior in the service, Admiral Rusin was very surprised when I declined the flattering offer and said I preferred to serve in the ships of the Baltic Fleet. When I was leaving he said I would be appointed naval attaché as soon as there was a suitable vacancy, whereupon I reiterated my preference to serve aboard the ships rather than work in chancelleries.

The next day I was already at Helsingfors, where Admiral Kanin, the Commanding Admiral of the Baltic Fleet who succeeded von Essen after the latter's death, had his flag on the yacht *Krechet*. My class-mate Tierbach was on his staff. He welcomed me very warmly and asked about my plans. I told him I wanted to be appointed second-in-command of one of the large destroyers, preferably of the *Novik* class.

Tierbach explained to me that my seniority would not permit an appointment to the *Novik* destroyers in that capacity, but that there were two vacancies open aboard the larger coal-burning destroyers. The Captain of one of these had already learned about my return from America and had asked the Staff to appoint me to his ship. The

other destroyer, the *Strashnyi*, was commanded by Iurii Starck, a member of the well-known naval family of Swedish-Finnish origin, who had just removed his second-in-command for incompetence. I inquired about the duties of the flotillas of these two destroyers and their best speed, as I realized from my previous war experience that speed was often a decisive factor in assigning destroyer flotillas to various expeditions into the Baltic. Then I asked to be appointed to the *Strashnyi*, as with her greater speed chances for interesting assignments were relatively better. Besides, the two destroyers manned by the Naval Guards were in the same flotilla, and my friend Baron Nicholas von Hoiningen Huene was second-in-command of another ship of the same flotilla. My wish was granted and the Staff issued the necessary orders to that effect.

The year or more during which I had been absent from the Baltic Fleet had brought many changes. The four new *Dreadnought* class battleships were in the line and I visited one of them and inspected her thoroughly. Their brigade made a tremendous difference in the strength of our fleet, and their speed of twenty-three knots made possible offensive operations far into the Baltic. While the G.H.Q.—the *Stavka*—were as insistent as before that the fleet should limit its efforts to purely defensive work, and would not permit any ambitious operations with the participation of the new battleships, there was still hope that some day this would be changed and our fleet would assert itself more firmly in the Baltic.

Although the new light cruisers were not yet ready, there were quite a few new large and fast destroyers of the *Novik* class in the ranks of the fleet. They were well armed both in artillery and in torpedo equipment and could take care of any light German cruiser that might venture into our waters, as the *Magdeburg* and the *Augsburg* had done during the first months of the war. In the submarines we also had a few decent craft to supplement the energetic work of the British boats that were based in our ports. The improvement in the *materiel* of the navy since the beginning of the war was very satisfactory, and what I heard about the new flotillas of large destroyers that were expected to be ready in the spring of 1917, the large submarines, and the light cruiser *Svetlana*, made me feel that at last there were the beginnings of a really modern navy in the Baltic.

On the whole, the scope of the activities of the fleet had also been considerably enlarged. The Gulf of Riga was firmly held by our light forces with the support of the old battleship *Slava*, the Aland skerries were fortified and also entirely within the framework of our

defense at sea. In other words, the navy had advanced from the narrow base—Nargen-Porkallaud—pretty far into the Baltic. The Germans had made an attempt to obtain control of the Gulf of Riga in 1915. They were able to concentrate greatly superior forces and made their way through the mine barrage and entered the Gulf. The Russian ships withdrew to Kuivasto. The enemy, however, after suffering some losses withdrew from the Gulf, and the great mine field of Irben was reconstituted and plans were made to build a strong battery at Zerel which could dominate the Pass.

On the whole, I thought that our position in the Baltic had become stronger than when I had left the *Rossia* in January of 1915. The death of Admiral von Essen was of course an irretrievable loss, as Kanin was by no means of his caliber.

A coastal steamer brought me to the roadstead of Kuivasto, where the *Strashnyi* lay anchored. A small boat came over for me and fifteen minutes later I was treading the deck of the destroyer. As I had never served in destroyers before, it was an entirely new experience for me. The more elastic discipline, as against the large ships, the closer connection between the captain and the officers on one hand, between the officers and the men on the other, called for a certain readjustment of my habits and behavior on board.

The *Strashnyi* was for her size a very powerfully armed destroyer. She carried three long four-inch sixty-caliber guns in line aft, an anti-aircraft automatic Vickers 40mm. gun, another 37mm. anti-aircraft gun, and two torpedo tubes. Her speed was about twenty-seven knots. In addition to the captain there were four other officers on board, and her complement included about one hundred men.

Captain Starck was ashore when I arrived. I inspected the men, made the rounds of the ship, and tried to become better acquainted with the officers, of whom I knew previously only one, my classmate Lieutenant Scholz, who was the flotilla torpedo officer serving on the *Strashnyi*. On the whole I was quite pleased with the ship, the officers and the men, although I noticed certain signs of slackness of discipline which I ascribed to lack of zeal in my predecessor, who had been dismissed the ship a couple of weeks before.

The other destroyers of the flotilla were also lying at Kuivasto, and about five o'clock all the seconds-in-command of the destroyers came aboard the *Strashnyi* and welcomed me to their midst, as the "returning diplomat," "our American cousin," and so forth. I was particularly glad to see Baron Huene and Potolov. While we were

drinking tea in the Wardroom my colleagues told me that they wanted to acquaint me with an unpleasant situation. The Commanding Officer of the flotilla, Captain P., was leaving his post for another assignment. The officers of the flotilla rather felt that he had let them down on several occasions and had lowered the reputation and the standing of the flotilla in the eyes of other officers. In view of this, it was decided not to arrange any farewell party for P. and not to give him any souvenir from the officers, as was customary in such cases. It was thought that the captains might decide to give a party of their own to P., and I was asked to tell Captain Starck the officers' decision not to participate in such a party or to have it held in any of the Wardrooms. As the second-in-command is the president of the Wardroom of his ship, the captains could not very well give their party on board any of the destroyers without their consent, and it was decided to refuse to give such consent. This procedure was not contrary to the naval regulations and was in accordance with the traditions of the Russian navy, where the Captain was merely a guest of the Wardroom, even aboard destroyers, where of necessity he had to eat every day with the other officers. However, it was very rarely that such incidents occurred as had developed in our flotilla.

While I personally was in complete ignorance of what had happened in the flotilla during P.'s command, it was impossible for me not to acquiesce, so I had to say that I would report accordingly to Captain Starck as soon as he returned aboard. Then the others left the ship and rowed over to their respective destroyers in their whaleboats.

When Starck returned to the *Strashnyi* late in the evening, I introduced myself to him and said that I was very sorry to begin my duties aboard by delivering to him a rather unpleasant message from the officers of the flotilla. Then I told him of the decision arrived at, and asked him not to use our Wardroom for any party the captains might decide to give to P. Starck was furious and asked whether I knew that he had dismissed his second-in-command only a fortnight before. To this I replied in an official tone that the matter had nothing to do with my regular duties on board and was a question of social etiquette which did not, in my opinion, conflict with naval regulations. Starck saw that there was nothing more to be said and walked away, leaving me to the rather gloomy reflection that I was starting my service aboard the *Strashnyi* under somewhat inauspicious omens.

For the first few weeks a certain coolness pervaded my relations

with the Captain. However, I did my best to perform my duties as satisfactorily as I knew how, and gradually our relations improved, as Starck was not vindictive and was a thorough gentleman.

My first turn at patrol duty at the Irben mine field, and the first attacks of German airplanes on the *Strashnyi* were both novel and interesting to me. In those days the planes flew quite low and their bombs were small, while our anti-aircraft guns were not very efficient. Only a few German planes were shot down that summer, but with one exception they scored no hits on our destroyers.

My first baptism of fire came on the roadstead of Kuivasto. The Captain was on leave and I had charge of the ship. In the morning some German planes were sighted and I gave orders to weigh anchor and man the anti-aircraft guns. As there was some delay in getting the anchor up I jumped on the forecastle and stood within the loop of the other anchor chain, directing the work of the men in clearing the anchor. At that moment a German airplane which we had failed to notice came up from another direction and dropped his bomb on us. It missed the ship, but at that precise moment one of the men on the forecastle let go the anchor by mistake and its chain began to run out around my ankle, tearing my shoe, sock, and trouser-leg to ribbons. The boatswain jumped to the automatic clutch and stopped the chain. My foot was a mass of gory flesh and blood, and I was convinced that I had lost it. As the men began to carry me to the poop the pain was so overwhelming that I lost consciousness. However I came to promptly when our surgical assistant got to work on it. It turned out that by some unaccountable trick the bones were not crushed by the chain, as it had run loosely, though very fast. A considerable surface of skin and tissue had been torn away, and some muscles and ligaments were broken. As an antiseptic measure, the surgeon dipped my foot into a pretty strong solution of iodine, whereupon I again fainted with the excruciating pain.

The destroyer was ordered to sea and we went out under the guidance of our Chief Engineer, who had a great deal more experience than the young Sub-Lieutenant who had just arrived fresh from the Naval College. Scholz was not on board that day, for some reason I do not recall, while our Navigation Officer had left the ship to continue his studies at the officers' navigation school. So I made myself as comfortable as I could under the circumstances and plotted the course of the destroyer on the chart, getting bearings taken from time to time and passed on to me from the bridge. We managed to get

safely to our destination, and I continued on board until the Captain returned.

As soon as the Commanding Officer of the Riga Gulf Forces learnt of my wound, he had a small destroyer take me and a wounded aviation mechanic to the Naval Hospital at Reval, where I spent some rather unpleasant weeks. The wound took a long time to heal, and I lost patience and returned to the *Strashnyi* wearing bandages. This incident somehow made me definitely a part of the *Strashnyi* complement. I ceased to be a stranger. Both officers and men were glad to see me back, and all traces of the initial friction with Captain Starck had completely disappeared.

Soon after my arrival in the Gulf of Riga, I met my friend Commander Alexis Pilkin, the former second-in-command of the *Rossia*, then commanding one of the destroyers in the Gulf. He told me an amusing incident involving one of the younger officers of the German battleship *Preussen*.

Pilkin's ship, like the other destroyers, was frequently but unsuccessfully bombed by the German air forces while on patrol duty. One morning Pilkin managed to bring down one of the German planes. He then sent a small boat to pick up the pilot, and the boat brought back a young German naval officer with an Iron Cross on his tunic. Pilkin recognized him at once as one of our *Preussen* friends we had supped with at Kiel in 1914, and reminded the pilot of that occasion. The latter then also remembered him and asked what ship he was on. Pilkin gave him the name of his destroyer—the *Moskvitianin*. Then the German asked whether that name had been given to a newly commissioned destroyer, as he had received his Iron Cross for sinking a ship called the *Moskvitianin*. Pilkin had to show him his log books to persuade him that he was aboard the original ship of that name, which greatly disappointed the captive naval officer, particularly when Pilkin told him that so far the German air forces had failed to sink any of our destroyers!

"*Unerhoert!*" remarked the officer from the *Preussen*, and mentioned that the Germans had been given to understand that three Russian destroyers had been sunk by airplane bombs.

While Pilkin's ship remained on patrol duty, the prisoner lived in Pilkin's room and ate in the Wardroom, being treated in every way as the Captain's guest. All the officers were sorry to have to hand him over to the authorities when the destroyer returned to its base. They cheered him up with the information that an open radio was

sent on the day of his capture, informing the Germans that he had been fished out in good condition and that his family should be advised accordingly.

That curious sequel to our gay evening at Kiel gave me considerable amusement.

One of the functions of the Riga Gulf naval forces was to lend support to the left flank of the Twelfth Army defending the approaches to Riga. The help rendered by the navy to the Twelfth Army largely consisted of artillery support by the battleship *Slava*, a couple of gunboats and the destroyers. The latter took turns in groups of four. As a result, this was probably the only sector of the long Russian front where the army had a preponderance of artillery fire over the Germans. When shelling the German positions the destroyers were moored fore and aft to buoys. Their fire was directed by telephone from an observation post built in a tree in the woods close behind the Russian infantry positions.

When our flotilla's turn came, I was appointed to the work of directing the fire, and, borrowing a horse from one of the army officers assigned to liaison duty with the navy, I rode out in company of a gunnery petty officer to the post. The road leading through the woods was being shelled with shrapnel by the enemy and I had trouble in keeping in the saddle and preventing my horse from bolting, as it shied at each burst of shrapnel. When I had climbed into the tree where the post was located I was fascinated with the remarkable spectacle of the German lines. Through the prismatic telescope I could see the dispatch riders going along the support roads and could watch the activity of the enemy in their reserve positions. Upon inquiring over the field telephone whether any artillery support was needed, I received a negative reply. Then I descended from the tree, leaving the Gunnery Petty Officer in charge, and went to call on the officers of the nearest infantry regiment.

The officers messed in a low wooden shed in a grove about half a mile behind the trench line. I found there quite a number of the officers at tea. When I had been introduced all round and had had a chance to chat with several of the officers I realized that practically all of them were temporary officers recently promoted to officer ranks, with only a few reserve officers who had had some little training before the war. Aside from the Colonel and his staff there was only one regular pre-war vintage officer in that whole regiment.

As one of the Temporary Second Lieutenants remarked:

"We're keeping him in cotton-wool, as he is the only one who can

stage a ceremonial march in case we are visited by some important general."

The men were largely recruited from Petrograd industrial workers and seemed to have only a vague resemblance to the type of regular soldier of our army I had been accustomed to see in pre-war days. There was something about the officers which I could not clearly define, but which struck me as very strange and unmilitary. When I tried later to analyze these impressions I came to the conclusion that the dominant note was utter scepticism as to an aggressive conduct of operations.

"As long as we leave the Germans alone in this sector they will also leave us alone. Of course there will always be a certain amount of artillery fire, some sniping and, perhaps, from time to time, a raid or two—we are at war, after all. But what is the use of undertaking any serious offensive operations? We attack the Germans first. In case of success, we take over their trenches. Then they would be reinforced and would throw us out again, particularly in the winter-time when you would not be here to help us with your guns. What is the total result? A few hundred of our men killed. A few hundred Germans killed. Would that bring the end of the war nearer by a day? We doubt it."

This was not said in so many words, but that is my reconstruction of their attitude.

There was a cavalry regiment stationed in the rear of the infantry division. I visited them also—they were the Finland Dragoons. There an entirely different spirit prevailed. The officers were mostly regulars and so, predominantly, were the men. They were smart, well disciplined and anxious to give a good account of themselves.

The next day I received a copy of the order instructing the land forces in that sector to attack the German positions, and was ordered to pave the way for the advance of the infantry by the gunfire of the destroyers. At first I proceeded to drench the first line of the German trenches, which were apparently very thinly occupied by infantry. After a substantial bombardment, I transferred the fire to the second line of trenches, which I damaged very considerably with salvoes of the four-inch guns of the destroyers, and after half an hour I started shelling the reserve positions and the support trenches. The enemy in their turn retaliated and shelled our positions. As I could not see any activity in our own lines or any rifle or machine-gun fire from the German trenches, I was somewhat perplexed as to what to do next, and telephoned to headquarters for further in-

structions. They asked me to continue to keep the German reserve position under fire. So I did so for another hour.

In the evening I was handed a copy of the report regarding the day's operations. I was furious on reading that the infantry could not make any progress "because of insufficient artillery support."

This procedure was repeated several times while I was in charge of the post, and I became thoroughly sceptical as to the instructions I was receiving and was not anxious to use up our good ammunition for no particular military reason that I could understand. Accordingly, I timed my salvoes at greater and greater intervals. The whole performance kept me wondering why this futility was permitted to continue. As I made friends among the cavalry officers and the younger liaison officers attached to our ships by the army, I began to hear diverse explanations of this rather peaceful method of waging battles.

"These industrial workers from Petrograd are all socialists and pacifists. A good many of them were taken off their jobs in munition factories and sent to the front as a punishment for some revolutionary activity. They're tired of the war and they're mighty mean to their officers. On the other hand, these high-school students from middle-class families who are commanding them are also none too bellicose. So here we are! They are probably the worst regiment in the entire Russian army, and we figure that we, the cavalry, are kept behind them to stop them from simply going home!"

In the fall I had several discussions with my friend Igor of the Special Half Flotilla, and with Vadim Makarov, as to the whereabouts of the German submarine base in the Gulf of Riga. We all felt that the few German submarines who attacked our ships from time to time were based in one of the small harbors or in the estuaries of that portion of the shore held by the Germans. Makarov thought that Roen was the likely place for such a base, while Igor and I were inclined to think that it was somewhat nearer the Irben Pass.

A few days after our discussion, I stumbled upon a chance to test my theory. Every night a motor launch armed with a 47 mm. gun and an anti-aircraft machine gun was sent out to patrol the mine fields of the Irben Pass. The seconds-in-command of the destroyers on patrol duty at the Pass took turns in commanding the launch. This procedure had a very serious drawback as the officers did not know the crew of the launch and had no chance to become acquainted with its motors or to correct the compass.

When my turn came, I took with me from the *Strashnyi* a small

air-bulb compass, both of my automatic pistols with a liberal supply of ammunition, together with a chart marked with the outline of the various mine fields and other hazards of the Irben Pass. As the launch drew almost as much water as there was above the shallower of the mine fields, night patrolling in rough weather was a somewhat unpleasant occupation, as there was quite a chance of touching off one of the mines with the keel of our launch.

While there was still light, I checked the compasses as well as I could. Before the launch pulled away from the *Strashnyi* I carefully examined the armament and the supplies of ammunition on board. There were no rifles or pistols on board, with the exception of the two I was taking with me. After giving the matter a moment's thought, I decided that it would be better not to take any additional ones from the destroyer.

In order to minimize the effect of the error of the compass, I had decided to cruise all night on opposite courses fairly near to the enemy shore; I thought the enemy's small craft were more likely to use some marked channel of their own quite close in shore and I had a better chance to fall in with them if I cruised further out.

The night was fairly calm, but as I started on my patrol, I could clearly hear the breakers on the German shore. This gave me another means of orienting myself in the darkness. On laying the course clear of any submerged obstacles, such as cement-filled sailing-ships' hulls, rock-laden barges and so forth, that at some place supplement the mine barrage, I started cruising along the shore, keeping a sharp lookout. The night dragged endlessly. I was impatiently awaiting the dawn. For the time of year it was quite warm, and that made it even more difficult to fight drowsiness. In order to keep awake I carried on a conversation with the quartermaster, and munched apples.

As morning began to break we found ourselves in front of the Mikhailovskii lighthouse. Now was the time to execute the plan to test my theory about the German submarine base at Irben. I decided to go into the estuary of the Irben River and see for myself whether there were any German submarines, or, for that matter, any small German craft lying close inshore. I did not feel any compunction about leaving my beat, as the patrol launches were in any case supposed to return to the patrol destroyers early in the morning. At half speed, so as to make as little noise as possible, I steered into the mouth of the Irben, keeping my guns manned and scanning the approaches with my powerful prismatic glasses.

Quite soon I spotted a small craft lying at anchor. I thought it

was probably a small German mine-sweeper, or perhaps a shallow-draft mine-layer. I had the speed increased to the full twelve knots the launch was capable of, and laid the course direct at the trawler, which I decided to attack in the hope that at this early hour of the morning I should have a good chance to come up quite close to the German ship before her lookouts noticed me; I had the light in my favor and besides was coming from the direction of the Baltic, that is, by the route more likely to be used by the German small craft than by the Russian.

After a few minutes of following that course I noticed that there were other craft lying at anchor, further into the Gulf than the trawler I had already sighted. Quite soon I realized that these were three German submarines.

What a stroke of luck! I could hardly believe my eyes, but soon the quartermaster also saw them and pointed them out to me in great excitement. Thus not only had my hypothesis turned out to be correct and there actually was a submarine base at Irben, but—what was much more important—there was apparently a chance of sinking or disabling at least one of them. Unfortunately the launch did not carry any depth charges and had to rely in action on its puny 47mm. gun, which was no doubt of a lesser range and hitting power than the armament of the German submarines. I thought, however, that the psychological situation was in my favor, as the Germans would not know what I was up to, and would suspect a trap where there was none. So I figured that they would try to escape and submerge instead of fighting it out with the launch on the surface. Should I score a direct hit on some vulnerable part of the submarine which the small shells of my gun could penetrate, there was a possibility of bagging one of them. For a second, however, I hesitated whether to attack the submarines immediately or try to capture the trawler, which did not appear to carry any guns and looked like an easy prey. The latter seemed much more of a certainty than the pursuit of the submarines and success in that direction would make an interesting record for the launch. However, I immediately abandoned that thought, as it was my clear duty first of all to try to molest the submarines to the best of my ability. So I changed my course and steered straight for the submarines without as yet opening fire, in order not to give them the alarm.

This was possibly the most exciting moment of my life. It all depended upon how long the submarines' lookouts continued to be unaware of the launch. Should I be able to creep up to, say, five or

six cable lengths, half the battle was won. I had no idea about the marksmanship of my gunner and could not attempt to fire the gun myself as I had to be in a position at all times to see the whole picture with regard to the submarines and the trawler, and at the same time to watch out for German seaplanes.

The fascination of this stalking was overpowering. The three submarines were big game with a vengeance and the chase had me absorbed to the utter disregard of anything but those silent, immovable hulls riding at anchor. The whole crew of the launch were tensely watching the submarines. They had not in the least foreseen such a conclusion to our night patrol work. The nearness of the enemy shore was obviously making them nervous.

Suddenly we saw men appearing in the conning towers of the submarines and all three of them weighed anchor rapidly and began to move in the direction of the Gulf of Riga. At that time we were within ten or twelve cables' distance from them. As there was nothing to be gained from further withholding fire, I ordered the gunner to shoot at the last submarine in line, and steered a course to intercept them.

Apparently it was too shallow for the submarines to submerge right away, or perhaps they were following some channel known to them, as they continued for a while on the surface. To my dismay I noticed that their speed was far greater than ours and that the distance between us began to increase. At that moment the gunner scored a hit on the conning tower of one of the submarines. The crew raised a cheer. However, apparently the light shell of our gun did not do much damage, as the submarine continued on its course without slackening her speed. In the meanwhile, our course had placed us abeam of the swell and the launch began to roll a great deal, making our gunfire more inaccurate as the distance continued to increase. Nevertheless, I decided to follow the submarines until they submerged or disappeared from sight in a surface position, as I was still counting on a fortunate hit. We had now come quite close inshore and I could hear a couple of machine guns opening fire on us from some position in the woods. We were still out of their range, as I could not see the splash of bullets in our vicinity. The men also heard the familiar sound of machine-gun fire and became uneasy. Two German seaplanes had appeared in the distance and were rapidly approaching. I pointed them out to our machine gunner.

At that time I noticed that our speed began to fall off quite rapidly and sent to the engine room to find out what had happened. The

answer came that one of our motors had stalled and that we were moving only under one. I still continued on the same course, however, firing at the submarines, which were rapidly going out of the range of our gun. Then the other motor also stopped.

The engineer came up to the wheelhouse and said: "Both motors are out of order and cannot function. We are so close to the enemy shore that there is nothing for it but to surrender, particularly as in a few minutes the German seaplanes will bomb us to pieces."

The crew gathered round and awaited my next move. Very deliberately, I drew one of my automatics from its holster and casually remarked: "I am very sorry. In that case you will all be drowned. I do not intend to surrender the launch, but will set fire to it and will myself get into the dinghy. As there is not room in it for you, you'll just have to put on life belts and swim for it!"

There was a moment's silence, and I added: "I'll give you ten minutes to repair at least one of the motors. It is of the utmost importance that we pass word to the patrol vessel on guard that the submarines are in the Gulf. After ten minutes I shall set the launch afire."

The engineer looked at me, then at the other men, and disappeared into the engine room. I pulled out my watch and began to count the minutes aloud. In four minutes one of the motors began to work and we started on another course—back to the patrol ship. Meanwhile the German submarines had submerged. The seaplanes circled above us high and did not drop any bombs, nor did they try to machine-gun us. In a few minutes we saw three Russian seaplanes coming from the direction of Zerel, and the Germans winged homewards.

As soon as I reached the patrol ship on duty (I believe it was the *Kunitsa*, commanded by Lieutenant Alekseev) I shouted to the latter: "Send a wireless immediately and warn the destroyers that three German submarines have entered the Gulf of Riga and that I shall give further details as soon as I reach the *Strashnyi*."

The wireless began to crackle almost immediately and I turned on the course towards our destroyers.

Because of the signal sent by the *Kunitsa* the patrol destroyers weighed anchor and began to move at a fairly high speed. At ten o'clock one of them, the *Turkmenets*, was attacked by a submarine, but as she was moving fast the torpedo missed her.

All this happened before I had reached the *Strashnyi*. I was received by Captain Starck, the officers, and the crew, like a long-lost

brother. When we had not returned at the time the patrol launch was usually expected, some apprehension had been felt as to our fate, and Captain Starck passed a signal asking our seaplanes to look for us. Then came the signal of the *Kumitsa*, followed by the news of the attack on the *Turkmenets*.

Admiral Kedrov, commanding the Riga Gulf Naval Forces, was very pleased with my action that morning and I received a message from him congratulating me on having discovered the submarines in time to warn the patrol destroyers. I was also commended in the order of the day of the flotilla and ultimately recommended for a decoration.

This whole incident became the subject of long discussions, and as most of the officers of the Division did not know about the breaking down of the motors and did not understand that I had opened fire only after the submarines had noticed me and weighed anchor, there appeared several garbled versions of the affair, one of which found its way into G. Graf's book *Na Novike*, where the action at Irben was quite inaccurately described.

Among the duties of destroyers based in the Gulf of Riga was that of escorting transports and merchantmen from Riga to the various ports in the Gulf of Finland. As far as the Riga Gulf was concerned, the principal reason for the destroyer escort was the aerial attacks on transports and merchantmen. In the Gulf of Finland and on the way there, the submarines were the chief menace to Russian shipping. The *Strashnyi* had her share of convoy work, but on the whole those convoy assignments proved rather uneventful, as the only incidents that interrupted the routine were a few German seaplane attacks which, as usual, proved ineffective.

However, another destroyer of our group, the *Kazanets*, was sunk by a German submarine just off Grasgrund. She took with her to the bottom of the sea the Chief Engineer and another officer, together with the major part of the crew. Another victim in our flotilla was the destroyer *Donskoi Kazak*, which hit a German mine while on patrol. She did not sink, but her after part and one of her propellers were blown off. Nine of her men were killed by the explosion, and eleven were wounded. Other destroyers that hastened to her rescue succeeded in towing her to Kuivasto.

Our own and another destroyer escaped destruction later in the year by a mere accident. We were sent out to investigate the small harbor of Roen, which was held by the Germans, on the western

shore of the gulf, and to bombard the harbor works and the interior in the hope of damaging German submarines should they be sheltered there.

It was a bright sunny afternoon with excellent visibility as the two destroyers steered for Roen at a speed of about eighteen knots. I was in charge of the bridge of the *Strashnyi*, which was leading. Suddenly I saw a mine floating right ahead of us. By a strange quirk of my brain, that mine got itself immediately connected in my mind with the fact that one of the destroyer flotillas had recently planted a mine field supposedly a few miles inshore from the point at which I sighted it. I immediately stopped our engines and signaled to the destroyer astern my reason for so doing. The latter came alongside and its Captain, Commander Knuepfer of the Naval Guards, a very able and energetic naval officer, thought that there was something to my conjecture, and with Captain Starck's concurrence both destroyers sent out their light motor launches with a sweep to ascertain whether there was a mine field ahead of us or merely an isolated floating mine that had broken its anchor wire.

The motor launches began to sweep while we backed our engines and moved out for a mile or so, reversing our course so as not to take any unnecessary chances, then dropped anchor and watched the work of our boats. In the meantime we discovered another floating mine a few cables away from the first. Apparently the Germans at Roen had become interested in our activities, as quite soon a squadron of German seaplanes appeared and proceeded to bomb us and the launches, without, however, scoring any hits. The launches went on with the sweeping and succeeded in establishing definitely that there actually was a mine field ahead of us and that the mines were of Russian make.

Lustily cursing Captain H. and his Navigation Officer who had made such a gross error of calculation in planting the mine field, we went home, after firing a few salvoes at Roen.

As winter was approaching, the *Strashnyi* was sent to the Sandviken Dockyard at Helsingfors, together with the two other destroyers of our group, for overhauling of their engines, docking, and general refitting. We crossed the Gulf of Finland at a speed of about twenty-three knots and proceeded at the same speed through the Hangö skerries to Helsingfors.

During the war there were no buoys or lights left to mark the narrow passages between the skerries, and only a few white spots painted on the rocks served as a help in navigating these tortuous

channels between the small islands. The snow already lying here and there made piloting even more difficult than usual.

My own acquaintance with these skerries was somewhat stale. I had not been there since the days when I had sailed them as a midshipman in a small torpedo boat. However, Captain Starck, splendid seaman that he was, knew these waters like his own plantation. So we went ahead without slacking speed, skipping the treacherous sharp rocks and sending our wake high up the flat granite slabs of the pine- and birch-clad shores. I was closely following our course on the excellent pilot chart our navy had prepared and was endeavoring to adjust my mental processes to the quick turns and changes of course that these labyrinthine passages called for. When we were about half-way through I gained a little more confidence, but still would have preferred to make it at about a twelve-knot speed instead of the twenty-three we were doing. Starck continued to steer the ship with the precision of a racing-car driver, the white spots on the rocks speaking to him in a language as plain as his own Russian speech.

We reached Helsingfors on time and within a few days our trim destroyer became a shambles. Starck had left the ship, as he had been appointed to take command of a flotilla of large new oil-burning destroyers. I remained in command, and took over the supervision of the various repair jobs done on board. The engines were taken apart and the Finnish workers invaded the ship with their chisels and other tools.

While we were lying in this helpless state, we were startled by the news that eleven German destroyers had made a raid on the Baltic Port and that some of them had been blown up on the mines of the advance mine barrage. The Destroyers' Division was immediately ordered out to sea. We were furious at having to lie helpless at Helsingfors while the raid was in progress. In a few hours everything was over and we learned that the enemy had lost seven of their eleven destroyers that had participated in the raid, all of them on our fields. The attack on the Baltic Port had no purpose, as there were no ships based in that port, and the only damage that the Germans inflicted consisted of two soldiers, two women, and four children killed, in addition to which a few people were wounded. The German personnel behaved splendidly from the viewpoint of morale, but the raid was badly planned and showed us that the German command had only the scantiest idea of our mine defenses. This seemed very strange to us at the time, for the German submarines were constantly operating in these waters and apparently had an adequate

knowledge of our mine fields. We thought that the German submarines were obviously using one or two passages which they found to be safe from mines, and that the destroyers had missed those passages. The selection of the Baltic Port, populated largely by peaceful fishermen, also spoke badly for the mentality of the Operation Division of the German Naval Command in the Baltic. Thus seven German destroyers, including some of the newest, were lost in one night in an expedition that had no real objective.

After the completion of her refitting, the *Strashnyi* was sent to Reval where she remained during the winter, when the ice in the Gulfs of Finland and Riga made navigation impossible for destroyers.

THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

1917

THE beginning of March, 1917 found me at Reval in temporary command of the destroyer *Strashnyi*, laid up for the winter in the small navy yard of that city.

The *Strashnyi* was hemmed in by ice in the destroyers' basin, where she lay in company with two others of the same flotilla and several large new destroyers, which had only recently been delivered by the yards.

The air was full of rumors about "disorders" in Petrograd. We were ordered to stop shore leave of officers and men as far as trips to the capital were concerned. The general impression prevailed that the movement at Petrograd would be quickly suppressed by armed force. So far, the events at the capital did not affect Reval, or at least there was no surface indication of it.

I remember very vividly the impression made upon me by the remark of the Commanding Officer of our flotilla, an old captain, that in case of a revolutionary outbreak he did not intend to fire on the people at the behest of Messrs. Protopopov and Co.

At the time of the 1905 revolution such a remark would have been quite impossible. It was obvious that the viewpoint of the rank and file of the naval officers had undergone a very surprising change since that time, particularly during the last two years. The speeches made in the State Duma by representatives of all political parties, including the reactionary leader Purishkevich, apparently had had some effect on the officers. It could hardly be expected that they would give undivided moral support to the Government, when even the members of the Emperor's own family, the Grand Dukes and Grand

Duchesses, were expressing their disapproval of the Emperor's policy and attempting to combat the influence of the so-called "dark forces" on the fate of Russia.

The men were outwardly quiet. There was no agitation of any kind in evidence, nor was there any sign of organized attempts to embitter their minds against the Government. Most of the officers dismissed the Petrograd events as an incident of no significance whatsoever—a bread riot, petty disturbances. The whole thing was viewed with equanimity, without any heat or indignation.

The text that follows is the translation of notes I wrote in London in the summer of 1917, based on entries made in my diary, kept on loose sheets of paper, on board the *Strashnyi* in February and March of the same year. These notes were left by me with my friend Baron George Taube in England until 1921 when I brought them with me to America. There is a possibility that some of the entries made under March 5/18 refer really to the previous day.

*Morning of February 28/March 13, 1917 **

Stoker Berdnikov just returned from Petrograd. He was on leave there and was a day late in returning to the destroyer. According to his story he could not get to the railroad depot on account of street fighting that was going on. He stated that the troops refused to fire on the people and had taken sides with the rebels. Berdnikov ascribed the revolt to police measures, which took the bread away from the people and brought famine to the workers. He gave evasive answers to my questions as to the attitude of the people and soldiers towards the officers.

After talking to Berdnikov, I sent him back to the fore-castle and went to call on Captain Wilken, to report to him what I had learned from the stoker.

The Commanding Officer of our flotilla is away from Reval, having recently gone to Helsingfors to visit the other group of his ships stationed there for the winter. Our destroyers are now without any real chief. One of the captains broke an arm, Azariev of the *Stereguschii* is at Petrograd on leave, so that Riumin of the *Zabaikalets* is the only duly appointed captain of our group. However, he does not enjoy any moral ascendancy or real authority over the other de-

* Throughout the diary, the first date given refers to the old Russian Calendar, the second to the Western Calendar.

stroyers. The group, therefore, does not exist as a unit. Every ship for herself.

Wilken listened very calmly to my statements and told me he had already heard that the Petrograd events were assuming a more serious aspect than was at first thought possible.

Noon of the same day

The Senior Naval Officer signaled to stop all shore leave. The men continue to be calm. Only the married second service men are dissatisfied with the cancellation of shore leave, and are asking that an exception be made in their favor.

Sub-Lieutenant Bubnov just arrived from Petrograd. I was glad to see him back on board the destroyer, as there was only one other officer on board, Vlasov, the Chief Engineer. In case of any trouble among the crew every additional officer, however young and inexperienced, might come in useful. According to Bubnov, all the disturbances at Petrograd were over and the main streets of the capital were occupied by troops faithful to the Government. The company of the Paul Regiment of the Foot Guards, which went over to the rebels, was already under arrest, whilst the crowds of workers were dispersed by the mounted police.

A telegram just arrived from the Staff of the Admiral in command of the Baltic Fleet. It contained instructions for me to hand over the destroyer to the officer next in seniority and to report at Helsingfors on board the flagship *Krechet*, in view of my appointment as one of the assistants of the Chief of the Department of Operations of the Staff. The events in Petrograd warned me not to leave the ship in charge of the young and inexperienced Bubnov. I reported to Captain Wilken that I hesitated to obey orders under existing circumstances, and with his approval I sent a reply to the Staff that I was unable to leave the destroyer pending the appointment of another commanding officer, and asking permission to continue my present duties until relieved.

It is unquestionably much simpler to have a quiet berth on the Staff right now. I feel, however, somewhat ashamed to leave the destroyer at such a critical moment. The crew have had time to get to know me, and apparently have acquired a certain amount of confidence in me. The months we spent in the Gulf of Riga were evidently not in vain.

I spent about an hour in the forecabin with the men, talking to

them on various subjects. I referred to the Petrograd events objectively, without any comment. I merely told them the facts, as far as I knew them. The men did not ask any questions and behaved with great circumspection, and I did not notice any signs of suspicion or unfriendliness on their part.

To prepare myself against any possible emergency I overhauled both of my automatic pistols and placed several spare magazines and a supply of cartridges in the top drawer of my desk. I also took from the ordnance store a powerful battery torch and put it on my desk. Then I screwed down the armor cover of my porthole. I went through all these motions so as not to leave anything to chance. I cannot imagine my crew attacking me. However, as the proverb says—God helps those who help themselves. It is better to be killed fighting than to be tortured to death like the Chief Engineer on board the *Pamiat Azova* in 1906.* But there is no pretext for such unpleasant thoughts and probably everything will pass off without any particular trouble.

Morning of March 1/14

After flag parade all captains were assembled by Wilken. He informed us that a decree had been issued dissolving the State Duma, and that the Duma refused to carry out the decree and had issued a proclamation to the army and the navy, asking them to support the revolutionary movement. It appears that the Petrograd garrison had taken the part of the Duma and that only a few weak bodies of troops were still supporting the Government. The movement seemed to be led by Rodzianko and Miliukov, at least their names were mentioned more frequently than those of the others. Helsingfors is quiet, but some very strange radiograms are reaching us from Kronstadt. Things seem to be going very badly there.

All the captains appear to have great faith in Admiral Nepenin and believe that he will be able to cope with the situation and solve the question of the allegiance of the fleet to the Duma without any unnecessary friction.

There was little talk during the council of the captains. Most of the officers were looking very worried. Wilken continues to be calm. He is a very intelligent officer and the Destroyers' Division at Reval is in good hands.

* The allusion refers to a mutiny on board that ship. Several officers were killed and wounded, and for a short period of time the mutineers gained control of the vessel. However, they were later overpowered by part of the crew, led by warrant officers and petty officers who remained loyal to the Government.

The usual morning battle drill and other exercises went off smoothly. However, I canceled the pistol target practice scheduled for the late forenoon.

Evening of the same day

After lunch officers of our group assembled on board the *Zabai-kajets*. Practically all of them showed signs of nerves. One of the engineers was pretty far gone in his cups. There was no discussion of the events of the day. Everyone was thinking things out for himself. I obtained, however, a general impression that the majority are in favor of the upheaval. They believe that the Emperor will have to grant a constitution now, and that with a constitutional form of government things will go better and we shall make progress in the war.

After dinner I made an attempt to read a volume of Baudelaire to while away the time, but was unable to concentrate and had to throw the book aside. I began to think what attitude to take toward the revolution. That it was a revolution and not merely a revolt, I no longer had any doubt. The Duma had sided with the popular uprising and become the head of the movement. People of such diverse political creeds as Miliukov, Guchkov, and Rodzianko were hand in hand against the Government, who had only a few hundred policemen with which to meet an indignant populace.

As far as I am able to judge the temper of the officers, the army will hardly send regiments from the front to suppress the Petrograd garrison. Perhaps the Guards might move. The rest of the troops are more likely to take the part of the Duma.

I hear that Nepenin is very angry at the Government, and that the same is true of a large number of admirals and captains. They seem to be convinced that with the present Government it will be impossible to win the war. It follows that it is necessary to find some way out of the present impasse. If it comes to a division of forces and sympathies, and some stay solid with the Government while others support the Duma, this will result in national suicide and the loss of the war. As it seems that the Duma, in the long run, has a better chance to win, it would be better for the change of government to come without bloodshed and internecine strife. If another council of captains is called it will be advisable to arrive at some joint decision for all ships of our Division at Reval, and to carry out that decision.

Even now we have no definite information as to what is going on in Petrograd. The *Reval News* is printing articles of openly revo-

lutionary import, and from time to time we receive telegrams and radios from Kronstadt and Helsingfors.

Morning of March 2/15

The destroyers' captains were requested to meet Wilken before the flag parade. We were tense and rather depressed. Petrograd news was discussed in whispers. Wilken read a telegram from Nepenin about the creation of the Duma of a Provisional Government and about the adherence of the naval forces at Helsingfors to that Government. A dull heavy silence followed. Wilken suggested that we discuss the situation and try to reach a decision for the ships of the Destroyer Division at Reval. Someone said that General Ruzskii had also gone over to the side of the Duma.

While we were discussing what line of action to adopt, a telephone message was received that a crowd of workers from the shipbuilding yards was moving on the harbor, bearing red flags. This piece of information increased the tension. It became clear that a decision must be arrived at without further delay. However, no one wanted to make the first move. The oath of allegiance to the Emperor, the tradition of the officers' corps—all this weighed heavily in the scales. The officers were feeling the tragedy of the moment: it was hard to betray their service ideals, to give up things they had long been accustomed to, habits which had become second nature.

Ultimately one of the captains spoke for an immediate adherence to the Duma, as every minute of dalliance might lead to unnecessary bloodshed. His words did not meet with any opposition. I commented that I was not going to allow any outsiders on my ship, as it was necessary first of all to maintain discipline in the ships's companies and in all military units. I opined that if discipline were relaxed even for a few days, the fleet would cease to be a force and would become a mere collection of ships and men without any fighting value whatsoever.

This started the discussion. Everyone wanted to speak at once. The fiery Commander Shishko shouted that he would place the loaded chambers of some of his torpedoes on deck and blow up his ship, should the crowd make an attempt to storm it. The other captains voiced similar sentiments. Captain Heltersen sounded a more sober note, asking a very pertinent question as to whether the men would permit the installation of the chambers and the wiring of them. This was the first reference to the possibility of insubordination among the crews, as up to that moment there had been no out-

ward sign of any doubt of their loyalty to the officers. Visions of the *Potemkin*, the *Ochakov*, the *Pamiat Azova* * suddenly flashed through our minds, leaving a trail of doubt in their wake.

A further telephone message announced that a large crowd with red flags was approaching the harbor. We got up. The decisive moment was upon us. The traditional hatred of the red rag was forgotten, old established convictions were sacrificed to ensure victory to our land. The concept of nationalism proved stronger than class feeling and political convictions. The shock was great. I noticed that one of the officers was sobbing quite openly, while many wiped away a furtive tear or two.

Upon returning on board my destroyer I ordered the crew paraded on the upper deck, and sent word to the officers that I had something of extreme importance to tell them. I felt an intense excitement rising within me.

The men were soon lined up, while the officers joined the crew.

"The crew to assemble on the quarter-deck," I commanded. A solid mass of bluejackets surrounded me, waiting with bated breath for my words. I never liked to make long speeches to the crew, always preferring to discuss all important matters with the individuals concerned. Now I had a great deal to say and was completely unprepared. As I began to speak I did not know exactly what I was going to say. I felt very much like passing an oral examination in a subject with which I had only a very superficial acquaintance. But as soon as I got started I overcame my nervousness and was able to speak calmly and firmly. My speech ran along the following lines:

"You have already heard from me about the Petrograd events. The rebellion has developed into a revolution. The State Duma has placed itself at the head of the movement, led by its president—Rodzianko. The old Government is overthrown. The Commanding Admiral of the Baltic Fleet, Nepenin, has taken the part of the people. The naval forces at Helsingfors are now for the State Duma and against the old Government, which brought the country into a position of extreme danger. The captains of the ships of the Destroyer Division, stationed at Reval, have just concluded their discussion of the situation and have unanimously decided to lend their support to the revolutionary movement in order to achieve victory over Germany, and for the good of our country. We have decided to place ourselves at the disposal of the State Duma. I was present at that meeting and I have

* Mutinies took place on board these ships during the 1905-1907 revolutionary period.

also given my assent to that decision and I suggest that you follow my example. I want you to promise to fight for the State Duma and for the government it has set up."

My words made a staggering impression on the officers and men. The former were not present at the captains' meetings, and the major part of the information discussed there was unknown to them. The men could not understand how the stern and even sometimes cruel Nepenin, whom they held in awe as the personification of discipline in the Imperial Navy, could join the revolution. The unanimous decision of the captains was also very startling to them. In all previous revolutionary disturbances our Destroyer Division had always proved the most reliable part of the naval forces of the Baltic Fleet, and had taken part in suppressing the rebellions of other naval units. Our flotillas at Reval were especially famous for their discipline and loyalty. The simple minds of the men were unable to grasp the reasons which led the captains this time to speak about the State Duma and to refuse their support to the old Government, instead of handing out the usual reminders about the oath and loyalty to the throne.

Whatever thoughts were flitting through their heads, the men remained silent and did not make any answer to my words. I then turned to those that were nearest to me and asked: "Nikolaichuk, are you for the State Duma or for the old Government?"

"As you command, sir!" was the subdued reply; and the boatswain added: "Wherever you lead, we shall follow."

This result of my speech came as a great surprise to me. Instead of general joy and enthusiasm, which I had expected from the crew, which was largely made up of industrial workers, I saw I had to cope with a very elusive mood in the men.

Again I turned to the crew: "It is now more than ever necessary to observe discipline. If there is any lack of order in the navy, the Germans will make use of the revolution for their own ends and they will vanquish us. It is our duty to show to the enemy that the revolution has not affected the spirit of our navy and that we are ready, as before, to fight to our last breath for our country. Are you ready to observe order on board and to carry out my orders without demur?"

With a cheerful shout the crew joined in the old formula: "We shall endeavor." It seemed to be a relief to them to hear at last the familiar words "order" and "discipline."

Similar scenes were enacted on the other destroyers.

In order to carry out my statement at the captains' meeting that I would not allow outsiders on board, I explained to the men that

we had to be ready for every emergency, and ordered the rifle squad to assemble on the after deck. I also told the warrant officers and the boatswain to arm themselves with revolvers, and requested the officers not to leave the ship until further notice even for a brief visit aboard the other destroyers.

By the time all this was carried out, a large crowd of workmen with red flags at the head of their column was seen approaching our part of the harbor, moving from the direction of the commercial port of Reval, where the larger ships were moored.

All of our destroyers took in their gangplanks. The officers assembled on the poops of the ships, with the men grouped behind them. The approaching multitude was in a decidedly ugly mood. It was made up largely of men from the shipbuilding yards, with a few seamen added for good measure, mostly from the cruiser *Oleg* and *Peter the Great*, the mother-ship of the submarines. There were signs of unmistakable hostility on the part of the crowd towards the officers of the destroyers. "Tsar's gendarmes," "Sukhomlinov's followers," "bloodsuckers," and other such flattering epithets were flung at us.

A tall fireman from the *Oleg*, dressed in his work clothes with a fur cap and earlaps, kept on shouting: "What are you looking at them for? Put them under the ice!"

The crowd stopped on the rim of the harbor and was buzzing like an infuriated beehive without, however, proceeding from threatening words to any overt deeds. The men of the crews of the destroyers were obviously quite frightened. I could see some of them actually trembling.

The back rows of the crowd were pressing on those in front. Seamen of the Naval Depot and the workmen of the Navy Yard were rapidly swelling its numbers. The shouts increased both in volume and acrimoniousness. The critical moment was approaching.

The situation was really quite absurd. Both sides were taking the part of the revolutionary government. However, mutual distrust was so great that they were ready to come to grips with each other on the slightest provocation.

My destroyer was attracting particular attention, and every possible abuse and insult was heaped on me and my officers. I stood at the gangplank with a firm grip on the heavy Mauser automatic hidden in the pocket of my "British warm." I was divided from the crowd by a distance of about five yards. I was quite certain at that time that I had only a few minutes to live, and, trying to be calm, was looking

into the faces in the crowd and attempting to decide whom I should kill first in case of an attempt to storm the destroyer. At that moment I fell prey to an obsession: not to admit anyone on board, regardless of the consequences. This thought took complete charge of me, and became a matter of life and death.

Right in front of me were standing several lower middle class Latvians or Estonians in felt hats and wide overcoats. They were apparently the leaders and the crowd looked to them for guidance. In broken Russian they were telling my men to lay the gangplank and disregard my command as that of an enemy of the people. However, discipline was still in force and my men paid no attention to the agitators. At the same time I could sense that the crew were bewildered and that it was not possible to count seriously on them in an emergency.

A small squat man in a wide-brimmed hat addressed me in a voice breaking with excitement: "I order you to lay the gangplank and stop preventing your men from joining our demonstration." This sent me completely berserk and I shouted furiously to the Estonian: "For all I know you may be a German spy. I do not intend to carry out any of your orders. I know myself what to do with my command. We here are for the State Duma and the people. I will not permit any disorder on board my ship, nor will I admit any outsiders. I am in command, and do not recognize any other authority."

The man in the wide-brimmed hat turned to his neighbors, talking to them in whispers, and pointing me out to them. Then he thrust his hand into the pocket of the heavy overcoat he was wearing to grip the pistol I could easily discern there.

"If I shoot now, the other officers would also fire. Probably we would succeed in dispersing this crowd. Then another one will come, well armed, and murder all of us . . . senseless bloodshed. On the other hand, if I let him kill me, the crowd, tasting blood, will become a howling pack of wolves and fall upon the officers just the same. Bloodshed is unavoidable in either case . . . it is better to kill than to be killed . . . play for time—perhaps another solution may turn up . . . now is the time to shoot!" All these thoughts rushed through my head in a mad headlong flight and I reached the decision in an instant. Releasing the safety catch of my Mauser, I pulled the pistol out with a jerk. The small Estonian turned livid. Apparently he realized that I had decided to kill him. He pocketed his pistol and dived into the crowd.

At that moment Wilken entered the crowd and got up on top of a

heap of snow to address the workers and seamen. He read them the telegram from Admiral Nepenin, which authorized the participation of the naval crews in the revolutionary demonstrations. The mood of the crowd changed immediately. Some of the destroyers were boarded by workers; from others, part of the officers went ashore and mixed with the crowd. Seamen were shouting good-humoredly to Commander Ryzhei, who stood on the poop of one of the destroyers: "Long whiskers, hey there, come with us!" Ryzhei, on his part, answered fairly good-naturedly: "You go to the devil and leave me alone!"

Gradually the multitude moved to the other flotillas and left our corner of the harbor. I drew a long breath. It felt like coming to life again after a slow torturing death.

Wilken told me to let a part of the crew go ashore to participate in manifestations in honor of the upheaval and of the State Duma.

I gave the order to signal: "Those desirous of joining the demonstration get dressed for shore leave." There were only ten members of the crew who expressed a desire to do so. After a few minutes they lined up on the quarter-deck in greatcoats and with earmuffs on. I inspected them myself and sent three of them back to shine their buttons properly.

Late evening of the same day

Today's peaceful demonstration degenerated into a riot. Prisons and police detention rooms were broken open. The prison warden was murdered, and the same fate befell the officer in command of the prison guard. The Commandant of the fortress of Reval, Admiral Gerasimov, was wounded.

These murders have no justification whatever. The crowd was not offered any resistance, and Gerasimov himself came to the prison to release the political prisoners. As soon as he addressed the multitude, a workman rushed at him and wounded him in the head with a bayonet thrust. The bluejackets that happened to be near Gerasimov barely succeeded in saving his life by tearing the assailant away from his victim and sending the Admiral home in a cab.

Gerasimov was always known for his humane treatment of his men. Upon receipt of Nepenin's telegram he had declared without hesitation his adherence to the Duma.

Thus the first blood was shed. God grant that it may be the last shed in this revolution.

I can see from the deck of my ship the fires of several conflagra-

tions in the city. From time to time I can hear reports of rifles being let off. It is impossible to make out who is firing and for what reason. Everything is calm on board. The men who went ashore to take part in the demonstration came back quite early. They looked frightened and confused.

"There is a riot going on in the city, sir. It is simply frightful. The Commandant was nearly killed," reported Torpedo Petty Officer Zakharenko on his return.

A whole galaxy of rumors made their appearance, each more fantastic than the preceding one. They all contradicted each other. It was said that troops from the front had reached Petrograd and captured the government formed by the Duma. Others said that the Germans had begun an offensive and had already taken Riga. Even the ships lying in our very harbor became subjects of real fairy-tales: that the officers of the *Oleg* had made an attempt to blow up the ship, that the conspiracy was discovered and that all officers were now under arrest. Also that the Executive Officer was made to stand on the quarter-deck with a shouldered rifle by men who wanted to punish him for his severity.

Generally speaking, our destroyer flotillas are still keeping quiet. The bluejackets are showing a great deal of interest in the welter of new ideas and words that are pouring in upon them like a torrent that has burst its dam.

I have spent several hours in the fore-castle explaining to the men the meaning of such words as "constitution," "republic," "elective systems," "secret ballot." I told them about the systems of government prevailing in other countries. I had a very good audience: the men listened attentively and were obviously very pleased with my explanations. Sometimes they voiced surprise that I was able to answer all their questions dealing with politics, a subject entirely new to them.

"We're a bit clearer now, anyway. At the start we simply couldn't make head nor tail of it," remarked Puzyrev, the gun-layer.

About a score of men from the other destroyers of the flotilla also came to the fore-castle of the *Strashnyi*, on hearing that I was discussing the events of the day with the crew. They are all in a very sober mood, quite certain that from now on everything will go well, that we are going to achieve a complete victory over the Germans and that a new and better life is ahead. The warrant officers are the only people somewhat spoiling this festive atmosphere: they complain about their hard lot and the long time it takes them to get promoted

to the commissioned ranks. "We've been eating black bread for a long time. It's time we had some chicken meat," as Kruchkov put it. It would be a pity if the rest of the crew were to take such a narrow egotistical view. There would be such an awful tangle and we'd all get involved. It is worth trying to direct their thoughts into a different channel.

These long discussions with the men, the events in the city, and the various rumors floating in the air have depressed me a great deal. I feel helpless and realize that each emergency is going to require an independent decision without even general direction from above. The chain of subordination and discipline has snapped. Shall we be able to mend it again?

I am unable to understand what is going on at Kronstadt. Admiral Wiren is probably murdered, since there was a radio message instructing Admiral Kurosh to assume the duties of Commander-in-Chief there. Is it possible that streams of blood will flow and that the first days of freedom will be besmirched by foul murders committed by bluejackets?

Morning of March 3/16

After the usual morning battle drill, I continued, at the request of the men, yesterday's discussions on current topics, which developed into a real lecture. The crew listened with unflagging interest throughout.

The Commanding Officer of our flotilla, Captain Aleambarov, returned today from Helsingfors. According to him everything is quiet there. Admiral Nepenin was successful in handling the situation in a very satisfactory way. The fleet is in complete order.

Our chief assembled the crews of the destroyers on deck of one of the ships and addressed them in a lengthy speech. Aleambarov was appointed to his command comparatively recently, and did not enjoy any popularity with the officers and men of the flotilla. His speech was very clumsy, and a few desultory remarks made themselves heard among the ranks. To save the situation I had to say a few words, which calmed the men and brought to an end a rather unpleasant incident.

Wilken again assembled all of the destroyers' captains. An imperial decree was received giving the text of the Emperor's abdication, and announcing the transfer of the succession to the Grand Duke Michael.

Wilken explained that the naval forces are under the orders of the

State Duma and that it is therefore premature to have the crews take the oath of allegiance to the Grand Duke. This must be delayed until the receipt of further instructions from Petrograd. The Emperor's abdication came as a complete surprise to many, perhaps the majority of us. We thought that the revolution would have as its result a constitutional monarchy. Where are we going now?

A few officers came from Petrograd, where they were on leave. They told us of the staunch resistance offered to the revolutionary troops by the men of the Naval Training Depot at Petrograd. According to them, one of the companies made a bayonet charge and was almost entirely destroyed by machine-gun fire. There are rumors that at the Naval College the midshipmen killed a number of revolutionaries and surrendered only upon the arrival of armored cars. It is said that the Naval Guards, headed by Grand Duke Cyril, went to the State Duma with red flags and placed themselves at the Duma's disposal. It is unbelievable that Grand Duke Cyril could do such a thing. Another Duke of Orléans. The analogy is completed by the fact that the latter also commanded the Naval Guards.

Poor Emperor! Even his closest relatives have forsaken him. His personal bodyguard sent deputies to Rodzianko. There were no Swiss Guards to defend the Tsarskoie Selo. How quickly the autocracy fell! Almost without resistance. A Fronde of the intellectuals, the disaffection of the officers, a hunger riot—this was sufficient to uproot a great monarchy. What will be created on its ruins and by whom?

Evening of the same day

We received today the Petrograd newspapers. Apparently the upheaval is complete. The resistance of the police is broken. The troops declared themselves for the revolution. The armies at the front are also acclaiming it.

It is so strange to see the names of the old generals alongside those of liberal barristers and leading socialists. This is a topsy-turvy world. I am unable to understand anything. It is not even quite clear who wields the real power. A council of workers and soldiers has made its appearance in addition to the government formed by the Duma. Where did it come from? Since the days of Khrustalev-Nosar such councils have not been heard of.

Last evening one of my men returned on board blind drunk and with a saber wound in his head. For a long while it was impossible to

make out the circumstances under which he was wounded. I took him to our hospital ship *Lava* to have his head dressed. Our staff surgeon was sitting with R. over a bottle of wine. R. is very bitter against the revolution and is quite free in his remarks to that effect.

The wound was dressed. Ultimately the man said he had insulted one of the men of the Frontier Regiment which the bluejackets always disliked, and one of the frontier guardsmen gave him a whack with his saber.

There are some meetings going on at the moving picture house Grand Marina. It is said that some of the officers are also taking part in these meetings.

Instead of the abolished police, a militia guard has been formed and ships are sending patrols into the city to help to maintain law and order. It is difficult to believe the stories told about the meetings at the Grand Marina. If these accounts are true, the group of men gathering at that moving picture house are aiming at the complete destruction of discipline in the army and the navy. If they succeed, we shall never be able to attain a victory in war, and the entire future of Russia will become a riddle.

It is very difficult to arrive at a correct analysis of one's own ideas, sympathies, and antipathies. We here have no idea what direction the revolutionary movement took in the other parts of Russia. As far as Reval is concerned it has a very definite socialistic trend. The bluejackets have very little notion about political parties and their programs. Subconsciously, however, they are all socialists. The questions of land, of labor, of the struggle of the laboring classes against capital are the most important to them. As soon as open socialist propaganda begins, all of the men of the navy will side with one socialistic party or another.

I studied Marxism some time ago and have a first-hand acquaintance with several social democrats and social revolutionaries. However, as I spent several years abroad and do not belong to any political party myself, I have not the faintest idea what tactics will be adopted by the Russian socialists. Will they follow the course adopted by Scheidemann, Vandervelde, Henderson, and Thomas, or will they begin to destroy during the course of the war all vestiges of the old system of things, in order to build on the ruins of it their new "kingdom of freedom"? It is impossible to expect that such an experiment can pass off easily, particularly during the struggle with an enemy like Germany.

By what methods is it possible to prevent the masses from their destructive impulses, and to canalize the revolutionary forces towards constructive work and the winning of the war?

I discussed these problems with several officers from different ships. We were unable, however, to come to any definite conclusions. Verderevskii, I understand, is working in the same direction, although I do not know the details of his plans.

I am spending all of my time on board ship, keeping in close touch with the men and endeavoring to maintain the last shreds of authority and some semblance of discipline. Isolated rifle shots are still heard in the city, as well as in the Navy Yard.

I find it difficult to sleep now. It is already three in the morning, but my nerves are in such a state of tension that I am unable even to go to bed. For the first time I find myself regretting that I do not smoke; tobacco would help, perhaps. The most tiring part is the discussion with the men. One has to be always on the alert, to listen carefully to all objections and have a ready answer to the most unexpected questions.

Morning of March 4/17

This morning brought a great deal of news and excitement. At a very early hour a telegram was passed to the ships with the text of the Grand Duke Michael's manifesto. We were instructed to read the text of it to the men.

On some ships the men were already assembled on the quarter-decks when the Signal Service advised by telephone that the manifesto was communicated by mistake and that it should not be read to the ship's companies.

To assemble the men, then to dismiss them without saying anything about the manifesto, would mean to give a further impulse to their rapidly growing distrust in their officers. To read the text and then say that the Signal Service communicated it by mistake and that the text contained several mistakes also did not promise any good. The word "provocation" began to be heard already on board the ships; it was looked for everywhere; it was seen in the simplest daily events. Under these circumstances, the captains of our flotilla decided to read the manifesto to the crews without any further comment as to the supplementary telephone message from the Signal Service.

Grand Duke Michael's abdication came as a complete surprise to the naval officers stationed at Reval. For the majority of us it was

very unwelcome news. Instead of a form of government to which we were accustomed and attached, something entirely new had made its appearance—a state without a monarch, yet not a republic.

The men behaved very differently on the various ships at Reval. On board some there were cheers for the Provisional Government, on others for the Grand Duke Michael. On some there was no cheering at all.

On the upper deck I met the Chief Stoker Petty Officer Romanenko, who had just returned from leave in his village. I always thought him a man of great common sense and intelligence, and decided to talk to him about the events of the week.

"Well, Romanenko, I have to congratulate you on a new, free Russia."

"I hope it will not be worse than the old one, sir," was his laconic reply. After thinking it over a while, he added: "Well, who knows what will come? God will decide."

The men are particularly restless today. They come and go from one destroyer to another, and carry on whispered conversations that cease abruptly as soon as they see an officer approaching. Some of them are demonstratively flaunting their insubordination and disregard of all discipline. On board my ship matters are somewhat better than on other destroyers. On the whole, however, there is a decided turn for the worse.

A workman came and asked permission to see some cronies of his. He was a suspicious-looking character, but it was impossible to refuse him admittance. He is obviously an agitator. Who sent him, and for what reason?

Noon of March 4/17

A column of bluejackets from the next destroyers' flotilla started a demonstration carrying red flags and inviting men from the other destroyers to parade in honor of the Revolution and to demand a democratic republic. Bluejackets from all ships, throwing up whatever work they were doing at the moment, thronged to join the parade. The officers tried to introduce some semblance of order, attempting to persuade the crews to leave at least some men on board the ships. Their efforts were in vain and only brought forth impudent remarks on the part of the bluejackets. Two petty officers from one of the destroyers' flotillas were particularly insulting.

Most of the men do not salute the officers any more, although even this morning they were still doing so in the most approved fashion.

Commander R. stopped a disheveled and untidily dressed seaman and asked: "Why dost thou omit to salute me?" The latter answered roughly: "There are orders not to salute any more, that's why I am not saluting you. And don't 'thou' me, that's forbidden now." R. was quite taken aback by that answer and could only mutter: "Who gave such orders? Who forbids?"

The seaman, his hands in his pockets to show his independence, triumphantly announced: "The Soviet of the Workers' Deputies is responsible for the order."

The procession was soon on its way to the city. A host of red flags was fluttering over it, with a blue cross of St. Andrew on the white naval ensign marking a striking contrast here and there. The throng marched to the strains of the Workers' Marseillaise, which they sang lustily. The tune of this stirring marching song of the French Revolution sounded more like a funeral dirge than a hymn of victory.

I stayed on board in order to try to find out the reason for the sudden change in the mood and temper of the men. Apparently the Soviet at Petrograd is acting independently of the Provisional Government and possibly is even beginning an open struggle against it. It is fairly obvious that the movement against the officers is stirred up by the Soviet and not by the new government, whom the navy is supporting.

4 P M March 4/17

Noticing a seaman reading a propaganda leaflet, I asked him to let me see it. The sheet proved to be Order Number One of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies.* I was horrified by its contents.

* In the first days of the Revolution three bodies were simultaneously issuing orders and instructions addressed to the troops. The State Duma, the Russian Parliament, or rather its Lower House—became in the beginning the rallying point of the military rebellion. Very soon, however, the Petrograd Soviet, consisting of leaders of the socialistic parties, later supplemented by delegates elected by the workers and the garrison of Petrograd, wrested from the leaders of the Duma the control over the armed forces. The Military Committee of the Duma was established to maintain contact with the revolutionary troops and to direct them. Within a week that Committee lost all shreds of influence it seemed to have gained over the soldiers of the regiments stationed at Petrograd. The Provisional Government, which succeeded that of the Tsar, was headed by a Liberal, Prince Lvov, and included Kerenskii as its Minister of Justice. The allegiance of the troops in the capital to that government was really fictitious and the Soviet was actually in full control of them. The Provisional Government originated as a result of a compromise between the leaders of the Duma and those of the Soviet. Kerenskii became later the head of the Provisional Government until its overthrow by the Bolsheviks led by Lenin.

The Soviet was issuing orders independently of the Provisional Government and at one blow was breaking asunder all discipline. I do not see how we can command ships after this order. The results of it are already noticeable today.

The men obtained copies of the order early this morning. However, they did not show it to the officers and had a secret parley among themselves as to its contents. In other words, they have no faith in us whatsoever, and the years spent in the Riga Gulf, and the common struggle against the enemy, failed to provide a cement strong enough to resist the corrosive influence of the order. Any workman entirely unknown to them can induce them to rebel against the officers. What a terrible chasm divides us! What can we do to bridge it over? We have very little time for the task. Spring and the breaking up of the ice are not far off. The Germans will come to the Riga Gulf and we shall not be in a position to oppose them. What should be done? Where are the leaders who should be followed and who are able to bring us out of this impasse? The Provisional Government is not in a position to help us. At best they may be able to maintain themselves at Petrograd. In so far as Reval is concerned, their advice and assistance will not be available. We have to act for ourselves.

If committees are elected, who will have the essence of power—the committees or the commanding officers?

The order prescribes complete political subordination, in so far as the political line of conduct is concerned, to the instructions of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. By what right? We did not elect this Soviet, and have not so far recognized it as the supreme power in the land. Military titles are abolished, the soldiers are told not to salute their officers any more. Who gave the Soviet the right to do this? Such changes are the prerogative of the supreme power of the Empire and not of a workers' soviet at Petrograd. An anonymous organization, a soviet of some kind, begins by usurping the power and is sowing distrust and enmity between officers and men, and destroying a military organization based on unity of command by the military chiefs.

Evening of March 4/17

The events of the morning show further development. The workers in the streets of Reval are disarming officers. On some ships the officers have surrendered their arms to committees that were already formed. What a state of affairs, what a distortion of the revolution-

ary feeling! To think that the men are disarming officers who adhered definitely and unanimously to the new régime!

I decided not to surrender my arms, as I consider such an act incompatible with my dignity as an officer.

A few minutes before suppertime, the boatswain came to report that the men wanted me to come to the forecandle to speak with them. I put my automatic into my trousers pocket and went to the forecandle, where the ship's company were assembled.

The Engineer Petty Officer Sand was the first speaker. He read aloud the order of the Petrograd Soviet and said that the men requested me and the ship's officers to surrender our arms in accordance with the order.

I was choking with anger and indignation and could hardly speak. Only after a while I mastered myself and was able to speak loudly enough to be heard by the men. I said approximately the following: "Only the day before yesterday, when I asked you whom you were for—the revolutionary government or the old régime, none of you gave me a definite answer. I had reason to believe then that you were in sympathy with the fallen government. Today you dare to tell me to surrender my arms, thus declaring that you have no faith in me. You have known me for a long time, but that does not seem to prevent you from rising against me at the call of persons practically unknown to you. During the first day of the revolutionary movement at Reval, I did not hesitate to issue rifles and ammunition to you. I had faith in you. Now you want to disarm me. I am not going to give up my pistols and sword and shall forbid the officers to surrender theirs. If you want to take our arms you will have to use force to capture them. Of my own free will I will not give them up."

The men were stupefied by my words and made way as I walked out of the forecandle. Upon returning to my room, I locked the case with the keys to the ammunition magazines and settled down to await further events. It is now eleven o'clock in the evening, and the ship's company has done nothing definite toward making good their intentions to disarm me.

Some of the sailors have foregathered on the deck above my cabin.

I have written a letter to Mishtovt in America, and have tried to make an accurate record of my impressions and distract my thoughts from the unpleasant prospect of an attack on the part of the sailors.

I have quite forgotten to mention that today the men have elected as their representative to the Reval Soviet our paymaster's clerk whom

only a few weeks ago they accused of theft. The psychology of the Russian soul is indeed complicated.

Morning, March 5/18

The night passed in comparative quiet; I did not undress and slept only in brief spells. About midnight some bluejackets came down the companion ladder to the door of my cabin. I switched on my ordnance torch and directed its rays on the entrance, myself remaining in darkness.

"Mr. Lieutenant, please hand over the keys of the ammunition magazines," said one of the men.

"What for?"

"We must have the guns ready for action in case of emergency, you never know these days."

"I have no intention of giving up the keys. The recoil cylinders are empty and the guns cannot be used. Be off with you and don't disturb me again."

"If you won't surrender the keys we'll take them by force," was the man's answer.

"What's the meaning of this? Get out of here!" I shouted, getting out of my bunk.

The bluejackets made for the ladder and did not disturb me any more. They were probably acting on their own initiative without the support of the rest of the crew, and wanted to get into the wine cellar.

An officer of the *Dvina* came to tell me there had been much disturbance on board her during the night. On board the *Peter the Great* a mass meeting of bluejackets was held and some officers of the *Dvina* were discussing the situation in the Wardroom. One of the crew came to the meeting and intimated that the officers were planning to blow up the ships and attack the sailors. An excited mob rushed immediately to the *Dvina* and it nearly came to bloodshed. Only by a display of considerable tact were the older officers able to calm the men and avert a crisis.

Fresh riots may occur at any moment. The naval and military authorities have no real power. All commanding officers are still at their posts but their orders are carried out only by a small fraction of the men. The whole machinery of discipline has come to a standstill.

It is comparatively calm in town. Order is maintained by the militia elected by various naval and army units and by the workers.

The chief of the militia is a certain colonel. He is reported to be an active and intelligent man. Armed squads of sailors are patrolling the main thoroughfares and suppressing any disorderly conduct.

It seems that the only authority really in a position to enforce obedience is the local council of workers. I have little information about the activities of this organization as I have not left my ship for the past week.

2 P. M. *Same day*

Two members of the Duma today arrived in Reval in order to bring information as to events in Petrograd and help to organize matters under the new régime. Each unit sent a certain number of men with an officer to meet the deputies at the railroad station.

About 10 A. M. we received orders from the Senior Naval Officer to choose three men and one officer from each ship. The deputies were to assemble on board the *Peter the Great* in order to discuss the situation.

The ship's company elected me, and at about 10:30 A. M., together with three bluejackets, I went on board the flagship. Some of the men I met saluted me. Some pretended not to see me and a few stared at me in a disrespectful and provocative manner.

The gun-deck of the *Peter the Great* where the deputies met was like a disturbed beehive. Small groups of men loudly talked over the events of the last few days. Several agitators circulated among them. The majority of the officer-deputies stood apart but a few took part in the discussions.

Gradually everybody drifted forward to the benches, grouping themselves according to ships and flotillas.

I have omitted to say that this morning a resolution of fourteen paragraphs was distributed by agitators on board all ships, and the deputies had come to the meeting with definite mandates from their constituents.

Evseev, one of the members of the Duma, arrived today and took part in our meeting. He belongs to the Peasants' Party, and made a speech on the Revolution, describing the situation in Petrograd. He was very vague about the rôle of the Petrograd Soviet. The men look upon Evseev as the symbol and essence of the Revolution, almost as a superman.

His speech met with prolonged cheers. Addressing the bluejackets, Evseev emphasized the fact that he belonged to the same class as they.

Sub-Lieutenant K. declared the meeting open in the name of the

Senior Naval Officer and proposed to elect a presiding body. This was speedily accomplished, and K. and two bluejackets were elected.

Admiral Verderevskii said a few words about the significance of the work which lay before the deputies. These words met with sympathetic attention.

K. described in a few sentences the situation at Reval, pointing out the danger of the rapidly increasing antagonism between officers and men, and advocating unity and a joint effort on behalf of the Fatherland. He spoke well and made a strong impression on the men.

Several bluejackets rose and violently attacked the officers, painstakingly citing the cruel suppression of the mutiny years before. All sorts of tales were told about hundreds of sailors being drowned in barges after the unsuccessful revolt at Kronstadt in 1907. One of the men hurled much abuse at the paymasters, accusing them of theft and graft without, however, giving any examples.

The whole atmosphere became very unpleasant—the attacks made by the men provoked angry retorts on the part of the officers—a few minutes more and instead of union and accord a final rupture might have taken place.

K. saved the situation, appealing to the sailors not to dig up old grievances, but to try to join forces in a unified effort to help Russia and beat the Germans.

Assistant Paymaster's Clerk V. answered this speech. His voice trembled with excitement: "If the officers do not want the old régime to come back, if they really are prepared to work jointly with us, we are ready to forget all our grievances and treat them as friends. Let them be our senior comrades, and shoulder to shoulder we'll fight for the Fatherland, not under compulsion but of our own free will."

These words produced a very good effect and relieved the painful situation—the immediate danger of a conflict passed.

A resolution was proposed for the consideration of the meeting. It was discussed by separate items, omitting any general discussion as to the possibility of adopting the decision arrived at without prejudice to the efficiency of the navy. In accordance with a proposal made by Evseev it was moved that greetings be sent to the Duma and the Provisional Government.

The items of the resolution referred to various phases of the naval service, and matters requiring serious consideration were discussed simultaneously with those of no immediate importance.

The granting of leaves, saluting, permission to wear mufti, smoking

in the street, advancement of pay, remuneration for repair work, increase of the separation allowance, the handing over of all matters relating to provisioning and supplies to the ship's company—all these questions were brought up without any system or consideration of the general principles underlying the naval organization.

The officers' opposition was very meek—every effort was made to avoid hurting the sailors' feelings. The sailors also displayed great moderation and readily agreed to give up some of their claims. With regard to increase of pay it was decided to express the hope that when the Empire's financial difficulties were settled, the rates of pay should be revised.

I did not expect that it would be so easy for the officers to reach an agreement with the men. During the last few days both parties had begun to distrust each other to such a marked degree that at any moment there might have been an explosion.

The efforts of Verderevskii and the Submarine Division's officers to bring about today's joint meeting were fully repaid by the results. By abandoning all politics and pursuing purely professional naval aims we may still do something for Russia and possibly save the navy from final disintegration.

No party programs were mentioned during the meeting. Only general phrases about freedom, democracy, the shortcomings of the old régime were used. Almost all the time was employed in the discussion of practical questions and there was very little speechifying.

The resolution was passed by a large majority and Evseev promised to bring it to the attention of the Provisional Government.

Another question arose: the men distrusted all wireless and other messages communicated by the Staff. It was urgent to create a new information bureau enjoying the full confidence of the men. K. proposed forming an information bureau with participation of the Submarine Division Flag Lieutenant. The bureau was duly elected and the Senior Naval Officer issued orders that no radio or other messages should be considered as authentic unless passed by the bureau.

The meeting was closed after these elections, and the delegates hurried back to their ships to inform their shipmates of its results.

The news from Helsingfors is very disturbing—it seems that the situation there leaves much to be desired. Up to this morning we thought that Reval was far more unpleasant, but the latest messages indicate that very serious rioting is occurring at Helsingfors.

Finland was flooded by German agents, and the local bourgeois sympathies are with the enemy and it continues to maintain relations

with Germany. I should not be at all surprised if the Huns are the instigators and an active party to the disturbances at Helsingfors. Nepenin is a very strong man and an able admiral. If there is any possibility of settling the conflict and pacifying the men, he will do it.

Kronstadt is in a very painful situation—many officers have been killed by the mutinous bluejackets and general anarchy prevails there. It was rumored that some of the officers did not behave properly—for instance G. tore off his shoulder straps and led a company of sailors to Oranienbaum where their behavior was of the worst kind. All information at hand is very vague and we have no official confirmation of the rumors.

The Senior Naval Officer issued an order to the naval forces at Reval, enacting some of the items of this morning's resolution—abolishing the salute, discarding the rule of addressing the men with "thou," introducing new regulations for leaves and some other minor changes. Many officers consider this measure unlawful as we have no instruction from the Commander-in-Chief on this subject, and that by this act Pilkin is overstepping his legal authority and creating a sort of autonomous fleet with special regulations, not in accordance with those acting on board other ships. I consider that the critics are wrong and their arguments pure sophistry.

We are living in an extraordinary time, without any advice from the central authorities, and we must cope with the situation of our own accord. The coördination work will take place later when the excitement of the first days of the Revolution has quieted down.

Of course the simplest line is to sit back and shift all responsibility on to the superior commanders, but such inactivity may bring disaster and complete anarchy. It is better not to wait till the men claim new rights and privileges, rifle in hand. It is much better to give way at once in all matters not seriously concerning the principles of naval organization, defending the latter to the bitter end, even to the point of threatening that all officers will quit the ships if the men attempt to encroach upon matters fundamental to our organization.

Evening, same date

I feel quite worn out, physically and morally, and am hardly able to put two sentences together. At certain moments I long to drop it all and leave the ship. We are unable to deal successfully with the situation and bring our men to the idea of the necessity of the continuation of the war and the gradual reorganization of the navy in accordance with democratic ideas. Our education and all our pre-

vious experience make us unfit for such work. But still, it is not time yet to give up. We must do our duty and help our Fatherland with all the means at our disposal.

In the afternoon the delegates met again on board the *Peter the Great* and our chairman, Sub-Lieutenant K., addressed us on the importance of joining the local Soviet of Workers and taking an active part in its work. This proposal received general approval and a decision was taken to join the Soviet at once. The decision was a right one. It is impossible to overlook the only de facto authority in existence at Reval—we must coöperate with it.

All the delegates lined up two deep on the quay in the vicinity of the *Peter the Great*. They had raised the St. Andrew ensign and were waiting for K., who was detained by the Senior Naval Officer.

K. appeared on the gangway, looking very excited, and announced: "Gentlemen: Our beloved and respected Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Nepenin, was shot at Helsingfors. Several officers have also been murdered. The reasons of the disturbance are not known. Admiral Maksimov is now in command of the fleet. I propose we take off our caps in honor of our late Commander-in-Chief." All present stood bareheaded for a few seconds.

The terrible news made a deep impression on me and made me less hopeful as to the future of the Baltic Fleet. Much blood may be shed and the deep distrust will grow between officers and men since the former will fear new massacres and the latter will fear revenge.

Nepenin's powerful personality had bound us officers of the Baltic Fleet in a strong unified body. Very few respect Maksimov and hardly any are fond of him. He is always playing a rôle—a mock Nelson—very obstinate and with unlimited ambitions. He does not even speak Russian properly. He will never be a success as Nepenin's understudy. As to his leadership in a naval action, he might be compared to Medina Sidonia.

The men were much surprised to hear the Helsingfors news, but did not express any special sorrow with regard to the murder of the Commander-in-Chief. Probably a strong propaganda had been spread amongst the bluejackets against Nepenin as against Admiral Essen two years ago when that great patriot and brilliant Admiral was attacked as a pro-German.

We started for the Grand Marina, the picture palace where the meetings of the Soviet of workmen took place.

The day was warm and sunny. Streets were thronged—most of the

factories were still on strike and many shops were closed. The idle crowd looked on with some curiosity at the unusual spectacle of officers and men marching together.

In Glinianaia Street I met the Chief Engineer of the *Rossia*, and supposing that he had just come from Helsingfors, began to question him on the situation there. He could not answer any of my questions as he was on his way from Petrograd and had no information about events in Finland. He told me that at Petrograd officers had to provide themselves with special licenses in order to be able to carry any arms, even side weapons. Other citizens were permitted to have firearms without any licenses. Perfectly wonderful! I should not be astonished if orders were issued for officers to get "permission of habitation beyond the pale," previously required by Jews traveling outside the area of the Jewish settlement. The officers seem to be the pariahs of the new free Russia. In what way have they sinned?

At the entrance of the Grand Marina sentries verified our documents proving that we were duly elected by our crews. The vast building was soon crowded by workers, sailors, and soldiers. Only a few army officers were present, mostly medical officers and temporary second lieutenants.

A long table covered with green cloth was placed on the stage, and the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Soviet with some other individuals unknown to me took their places at this table.

The proceedings began by an election of the presiding body, consisting of three members, in accordance with the number of sections—workers, navy, and army. The delegates also sat in sections, the workers occupying the right side, the army the center, and the navy forming the left wing.

Sub-Lieutenant K., who presided on board the *Peter the Great*, a medical officer of Jewish extraction, and a foreman of the Baltic shipbuilding yard were elected. An assistant paymaster's clerk was appointed secretary of the Soviet.

It was decided to name the Soviet the Reval Council of Workers, Navy and Army Delegates.

The chairman of the Executive Committee made a report about the general situation at Reval during the last few days and informed us that about thirty German spies had escaped from the Tower of St. Margaret. He mentioned the rumors about the vast subterranean dungeons where many leaders of the mutiny on the *Pamiat Azova* were said to be incarcerated.

The meeting went off fairly smoothly, notwithstanding the fact that the chairman was rather incompetent. Only the soldiers behaved noisily and often interrupted the speakers.

While the proceedings were going on, news arrived of serious disturbances in the Third Artillery Regiment, quartered at Peterhof in the vicinity of Reval. A delegation was immediately dispatched to prevent further rioting and possible excesses.

An officer of the Army General Staff is playing a very important part in the Soviet—he is not an elected member, but represents the Military Governor of the Reval fortified district. The naval officer delegates are a very heterogenous crowd. Some of them are captains and commanders, but the bulk belongs in the ranks of lieutenants and lieutenant-commanders. Admiral Essen's son represents his flotilla, and several other officers in command of destroyers and submarines were delegated by their men.

The meeting came to an end at 6 P. M., and it was agreed that we meet every afternoon, and devote the evenings to the enlightenment of the constituents as to the day's work of the Soviet.

The whole impression gained from the meeting is much better than I presumed. The crowd behaved decently without any special disorder. There is too much speechifying, but after so many years of silence this is only natural. Everyone wants to exchange opinions with others and explain his views. The people believe that the Golden Age has come to Russia with the Revolution—and are convinced that theft, murder, and other crimes will now cease. Prisons will be closed and men will treat each other with love and consideration. It all strikes me as a little pathetic.

One sailor expressing his views on the subject said: "Any man who continues to steal now is a real offender against the law of nature and should be killed on the spot as unfit to live." The same man recommended the liberation of all criminals.

Those simple creatures believe that human nature has been changed overnight and is now freed of all evil impulses. I can understand that bluejackets and soldiers are simple enough to give credit to such nonsense, but what of the intelligentsia and semi-intelligentsia who pretend to lead them?

So they really think that the *Aetas Aurea* came into existence in March 1917? In that case we have millions of Manilovs and no Sobakevichs at all, not to mention Chichikovs.*

* The allusion is to characters in Gogol's *Dead Souls*.

Evening of March 8/21.

So much time is wasted in meetings, talking to the men, lectures at the Elevator Building, that I have no time to pay sufficient attention to my duties on board. Every evening I am dead tired, and the last few days have been unable to keep up with my diary. Now I shall try to record the most striking features of the past week.

The Soviet is carrying on its work fairly well. Instead of the original chairman, who proved to be a failure and could not cope successfully with our parliament which has grown to six hundred members, another was elected, also a foreman of one of the shipbuilding yards. He seems to be a pleasant able man, as impartial in his judgments as possible, and frequently even supporting the moderate elements.

I had a personal talk with him yesterday. His idea is to develop the Soviet into a Chamber of Deputies of Estonia. Representatives of the wealthier sections of the population such as the Union of Technical Engineers, Householders Association, etc., were also invited to take part in the work of the Soviet.

If these moderate views prevail, the result of the Soviet's work might be quite good. But the majority of the delegates lack education and favor extreme measures of propaganda. The soldiers are almost hopeless—they do not understand the simplest questions, are uncertain how to vote, and take very little interest in the Soviet's work in general, but as soon as the word "land" is pronounced by one of the speakers, the whole mob rushes on to the stage pushing and shouting each other down. Besides land, the soldiers' main interest is the question of leave. It will be impossible to make them fit to discuss properly questions of state importance within a few weeks. In fact, all the army at the front is just as ignorant as our Reval soldiery, and I do not see by what means it will be possible to make them temporarily forget land and leave, in order to fight the enemy.

Our sailors are the patriotic part of the Soviet. They emphasize their intention to fight the Germans to the end and to the final destruction of German imperialism, including the expulsion of the Hohenzollerns. The bluejackets have threatened to make the workers do their jobs by armed force if they do not return to their tools immediately. The navy is the most active section of our Soviet. Several officers have influence over the men and are the leaders of the sections. K. is very much respected, also D.—a Knight of St. George's, twice wounded; Essen's son has a following among the delegates of the submarines, as also N. of one of the destroyers' flo-

tillas, an engineer of the *Rurik* and some others. There are a couple of officers who try to play to the gallery and talk all sorts of rot in order to gain influence on the men. They have but little success and the sailors do not fall into the traps set by these demagogues.

The bluejackets are very keen on establishing perfect order in the town and are very proud of the fact that few criminal offenses have occurred at Reval since the Revolution. They have no mercy on thieves.

I shall jot down one case in particular which is not without interest. A stoker on one of the destroyers, while on patrol duty ashore, stole a gold watch during a house-to-house search ordered by the Soviet. His misdeed was found out and he was immediately put under arrest.

The ship's company judged the culprit and resolved to inflict upon him capital punishment. They were about to carry out the execution when by chance one of the members of the Executive Committee of the Soviet was informed of this fact and persuaded the men to put the matter before the Soviet.

When the thief was led on the stage, escorted by six armed bluejackets, and the chairman of the ship's committee informed the audience of his misdeed, the crowd got very much excited and expressed violent anger. The soldiers made more noise than the rest and went on shouting: "Away with the thief!" "Shoot him immediately!" "Kill the dirty dog!" and so on.

The chairman of the Soviet succeeded in calming the storm of indignation after a few minutes with a proposal to institute regular criminal court proceedings. He called for volunteers to act as the criminal's counsel, the ship committee's chairman acting as prosecutor.

Considering that bloodshed in present circumstances might lead to very unpleasant consequences, I consented to defend the thief and try to save his life.

After the speech of the prosecutor, I made a few remarks about the general position taken by Russian criminal law in regard to the death penalty and indicated that such was supposed to be inflicted only in two cases, one of which was done away with by the Revolution so that only one remained—an attempt to break through a plague quarantine.

Insisting that all the best Russians had always protested against the infliction of capital punishment under special legislation (state of

siege, state of martial law, etc.) not in the actual zone of warfare, I said that the Soviet was not in a position to agree with the resolution of the ship's company to inflict the penalty of death for a theft under aggravating circumstances. I closed my speech by advising the audience not to stain with blood the first days of Russian freedom, and proposed that the offender be sentenced to one year at hard labor.

The motion was passed by a large majority and the death sentence canceled.

I believe that it is worth while to mention another incident throwing light on the ideas prevailing in our Soviet. As soon as we obtained a list of the officers murdered at Helsingfors, I proposed to the Soviet to address the Petrograd and Helsingfors Soviets of workers with an urgent request to appoint a special inquiry committee to investigate these murders and bring justice on the culprits. I read the list, and since the names included several men well known and popular with the sailors, such as Lieut. Commander I., Lieut. L., and others, my proposal was met with approval by the majority. Several members, however, rose to speak against my motion, and I am very sorry to say that amongst my opponents were three officers, including one naval commander. Most of the speakers pointed out that the measure I proposed might cause disturbances and was ill advised in the present situation.

The chairman allowed me to reply to each opponent immediately after his speech and I succeeded without much difficulty in defeating them, insisting on the necessity of being just and clearing up the matter.

To the officers who opposed my move I did not reply at all, saying only that the audience would undoubtedly understand my feelings if I refrained from arguing with gentlemen in officers' uniforms who seemed to care nothing for their comrades or the reasons for their murder.

My move was passed by a fair majority and the secretary of the Soviet was instructed accordingly.

During the revolutionary days the only persons murdered in Reval were, as I have already said, the warden of the prison and the officer commanding the guard at that prison. Besides those who perished in Reval proper, several officers of the Third Artillery Regiment have been burned alive at Peterhof, a few miles from Reval, by their own men, who had shut them into a barn and set fire to it.

A delegation sent by the Reval Soviet arrived too late, and the dastardly deed was accomplished before the delegates had reached Peterhof.

The army soldiers are really the worst element at Reval. The men are ignorant, most of their officers are young, and, to make things worse, are not numerous enough. That makes it very difficult to guide into a safe channel the turbulent masses of the soldiery. Besides, all they are clamoring for is leave, while those who have reached forty years of age and are serving in the labor battalions insist upon being demobilized, pointing out that thousands of younger men working in offices and in the industrial plants are earning large wages, while they of the older generation have to undergo all kinds of hardships, and are paid only a penny a day. With these middle-aged people it won't be possible to do anything at all. I believe that it would be better to let them go and to replace the labor battalions by hired laborers.

The soldiers do not seem to be getting along with their officers at all. They have expressed their lack of confidence in practically all their chiefs who have seen service in pre-war time. In some units only the Temporary Second Lieutenants are left. Complete decay and stagnation is setting in and there is no firm power which can compel the troops to observe even a certain measure of discipline and obey the officers. I am becoming very pessimistic about the future.

The workers are returning to work after having obtained an eight-hour day. Objections pointing out that we were at war and that it was necessary therefore to work more than eight hours during the continuance of hostilities in industries connected with the defense of the country did not have any effect. Assurances are forthcoming that production would not suffer from the introduction of the eight-hour day, and that, on the contrary, it would be increased by some twenty percent. These statements do not reassure me. They may prove true, perhaps, on certain days when the workers are deliberately trying to establish their case, or taken in comparison with periods when work was slack, as immediately before the Revolution.

Even the workers are stressing their patriotism and behave better than the soldiers. They have passed a very moderate resolution on the question of getting back from the army the workers who were sent to the front, in guise of punishment, during wartime, and have merely submitted it to the Petrograd Soviet for consideration.

On the whole, the Reval Soviet is not so bad, but the mood of the

men on board the ships and in the depots is much worse. The members of the Soviet are persons with a better education than the average, while the masses of the seamen are much more ignorant than their delegates at the Soviet. Besides the various rumors which are constantly keeping the men excited and are apparently purposefully spread by some organization of agitators, the ships' committees are introducing a great deal of disorder into the service on board. Unfortunately it is impossible to do away with these committees for the present, as the men consider them their control organs over the officers, and are not carrying out any orders which are contrary to the views of these committees. So far, the talk has been mostly about the economic functions of the committees, about handing over to them authority as to shore leave for the men, about disciplinary punishments, etc. I think, however, that this is merely a beginning, and gradually the committees will begin to interfere with all phases of life on board the ships. The men have already begun to analyze last summer's operations of the naval forces, and are criticizing their various aspects, singling out in their criticisms the actions of individual commanding officers. It will be very difficult to command a destroyer in the summer, particularly in action. Insubordination will always be a possibility and a constant threat, and one will have to cope with those cases single-handed, at the daily risk of being thrown overboard. Not a very pleasant prospect!

Instructions from Petrograd are also far from helpful. They are issued by: (1) The Military Committee of the State Duma; (2) The Provisional Government; and (3) The Petrograd Soviet.

Sometimes instructions appear bearing the joint signatures of two or all of these bodies. The seamen are giving credence only to documents signed by the Petrograd Soviet. All other orders are viewed by them sceptically. The actions of the local senior officers, both naval and military, are also giving the impression that the decision of the Soviet would have a decisive influence with them. Perhaps they have no other choice. The Soviet has the factual control over the soldiers and the seamen. Who would support the commanding officers should they oppose the wishes of the Soviet? Perhaps a few officers, against whom there is a constant agitation going on, and the second service men, who are in that respect in an even worse situation than the officers. It seems probable that the whole institution of second enlistment will be abolished. This will have a very detrimental effect on the fleet, particularly in the smaller ships and the submarines. The "hydra of counter-revolution" is imagined to be

omnipresent, and on the pretext of combating that imaginary threat the very foundations of the naval organization are being undermined.

Up to date I do not have definite news as to the events that have taken place at Kronstadt. All we know is that practically all admirals have been massacred and that a large number of other officers have shared their fate. Information about events at Helsingfors is also very meager.

In our flotilla a very active agitation is in progress against Captain X., two of the destroyer captains, and a few other officers. I am trying to combat that pernicious activity of the agitators, but have little hope that my efforts will be crowned with success. Several officers will have to leave the flotilla. In other ships similar events are taking place. As the basis for that agitation all kinds of things are being used to get rid of the officers: a German name, strictness with the men, reckless bravery which exposes the lives of the men to unnecessary danger, and what not.

As the naval officers are not a numerous body it will be very difficult to replace those whom the men may declare undesirable. Besides which, the other officers will not be able to carry on their work with confidence, knowing that their career and service reputation are dependent on the whim of two or three of their men who might take a dislike to them. All kinds of old accounts are being settled now. Several years' accumulation of dirty linen is being washed in public. I am accused of being unnecessarily strict and of having exposed human lives to risk without sufficient reason. Very often I feel myself in the position of an animal tamer and have been able to maintain myself on board only because among the crew there is not a single man who really hates me and has sufficient brains to carry on an active agitation against me. So far I have been able to cope with the situations as they have arisen, but how long can I last under the strain of this life and the tremendous pressure every day, both on my time and on my reserves of nervous energy?

March 8/21.

Yesterday I forgot to record the incident which befell Captain H.

During the last few days Reval has been flooded by numerous delegations from the island of Nargen, from Hapsal, from the distant shore batteries, and from towns in the neighborhood. These delegations are received by processions carrying red flags. There is a great deal of cheering, the music plays the "Marseillaise," and the

speakers of the day ("duty speakers," as we call them) deliver long orations.

After the exchange of greetings, the crowd proceeds to the Soviet and there the whole thing starts over again. All this is greatly interfering with the work of the Soviet and takes up a great deal of its time. A couple of days ago a delegation of this sort arrived from Nargen. It was headed by a bluejacket with flowing locks who was a profuse speaker. He told us with a great deal of pathos about the sufferings he had had to undergo under the old régime, orated endlessly about various Nargen affairs, and wound up by calling for union, brotherly love, and teamwork—as customary in such cases, and in accordance with the set pattern for speeches of greeting, which is becoming very tedious.

As soon as the man had finished his speech, a delegation from one of the destroyer flotillas with Lieutenant N. at its head mounted the rostrum. Lieutenant N. asked for the floor, and pointing at the long-haired bluejacket from Nargen said:

"This man, who has just exhorted you to brotherly love and union, had a few minutes before incited a mob to violence, and was the cause of a grave insult to our beloved chief, Captain H. The men of our flotilla were going to take part in a demonstration with Captain H. at their head. This man pointed out our chief to the mob, and shouted: 'That officer handed me over to the gendarmes on board the *Tsesarevich*!' Upon these words some scoundrel threw himself upon H. and tore off his shoulder straps. You all know what an insult this is to an officer. H. wanted to shoot himself and our men are watching him to prevent any attempt at suicide. We are delegated by the crews of our flotilla to ask for justice."

H. was well liked at Reval. The seamen raised quite a din and nearly mobbed the hairy bluejacket from Nargen, denying him a word in his own defense. The Soviet immediately carried a resolution of regret as to the incident and sent a delegation to H. to offer apologies. The long-haired one was ultimately allowed to speak. He was very long-winded in his apologies, saying he had not incited the mob against H., that he was himself very devoted to him and that the whole thing was the result of a misunderstanding. That incident has left a very bad taste in my mouth. Shoulder straps have been torn off and the culprit has suffered no punishment. It is very doubtful that the Soviet's apology is sufficient atonement for such an insult.

In the Soviet a struggle has set in with the Executive Committee,

which has arrogated to itself legislative power. The President of the Committee got it in the neck at the last meeting.

A representative of the Provisional Government has at last made an appearance on our horizon. Having dismissed the Governor of the Province of Estonia, the Provisional Government has appointed the Mayor of Reval to the position of Komissar of Estonia. This man is simply a figurehead, as he has no power at his disposal to carry out measures instigated by the Provisional Government. The real power is in the hands of the Soviet, which is jealously guarding its prerogatives. All resolutions carried by meetings as to the recognition of the Provisional Government are a mere formality and completely lack any concrete content. In Reval the Commandant (Admiral Leskov), the Senior Naval Officer, and the Komissar are definitely powerless to act without the acquiescence of the Executive Committee of the Soviet, which is the only real authority at Reval and throughout Estonia.

What is going on in the rest of Russia is not clear to me. Here, in Reval, the Provisional Government is nothing but a myth.

Commander A. has returned from Petrograd where he has been since the end of February. He had to go through some unpleasant moments, having been put against the wall several times and escaped being shot only by sheer luck.

The information we had previously received about the Second Naval Division was not correct. The recruits had gone to the State Duma offering their allegiance to it. The next day the commanding officer, Major General Giers, was called out from his house by a few seamen and brutally murdered on the doorstep. His body, naked and mutilated, lay in the street for quite a long time. These beasts did not permit the family to bury Giers for several days. His son is an officer on board the *Oleg*. The poor lad will find it difficult after that to serve in the navy, seeing in each bluejacket the possible murderer of his father, as the culprits have remained undiscovered and the Provisional Government cannot or will not appoint a court of investigation to locate them.

One hears real horrors about Kronstadt. Admiral Wiren was tortured for a long time, then soaked in kerosene and burned. Admiral Butakov died very pluckily. When his murderers came for him he said: "I know you have come to kill me. I am not going to change my political convictions and am ready to die for the Tsar and the Fatherland." He took leave of his family, put on a pair of clean white gloves, and went to the Anchor Square where officers were

being shot by the bluejackets. When he arrived there he said: "Let me pray before death," took off his cap and crossed himself.

The young recruits who escorted him wept, and shot him in the back as they did not dare to look him in the face. Dozens of bodies of murdered officers were thrown into the ravine near the Cathedral. It is said that sailors are afraid to walk at night past that spot, as they see ghosts, while sentries in the nearby posts report having heard the wailing of the dead and seen white figures creeping up the slopes of the ravine. Here is a new legend in the making.

A good many officers are incarcerated in the Kronstadt prisons. They are being fed on garbage and are daily subjected to insults. Several of them have gone mad. The representative of the Provisional Government is unable to achieve anything to help them. The garrulous fellows from the State Duma have no guts to ask for justice for the victims of the mob, making only feeble efforts to persuade the bluejackets to let these officers go. The bluejackets are making fun of the impotent central government. A weak government will always be despised by a mob. The Provisional Government is as wax in the hands of the Soviet. Our middle-class liberals are an unlucky lot, with the best intentions in the world and complete impotence in achieving anything. One does not see any really strong men in the Government. They are all weaklings. Chekhov heroes—that's what they are.

How, in Heaven's name, we are going to continue the war under these circumstances, I really have no idea. The output of industrial plants is falling off, the troops have no discipline, there is no firm government at hand. The French Revolution would hardly serve as a pattern for ours—the national temperament and culture are entirely different.

It is very difficult to get along with the committees. The Seamen's Section of the Central Committee has prepared instructions of a kind, but these are interpreted in a different manner on practically every ship. Yesterday a petty officer was late in returning from shore leave. He asked me not to report him to the committee, which request I refused. I have no disciplinary power whatsoever myself and can merely report an incident to the committee for their decision. This morning at the committee meeting I brought up the case and requested that, to make an example, the culprit be severely punished. The committee decided that a reprimand was sufficient. My authority dwindles day by day, although I was elected president of the Flotilla General Assembly and likewise president of the Officers'

Group. The ships' captains do not dare to issue any orders, even those dealing with repair work on board their ships. Yesterday the Flag Gunnery Officer of the flotilla asked me to take steps to ensure the assistance of the crews to the workers engaged in mounting anti-aircraft guns in the destroyers. When I remarked that this did not seem to come within the scope of my duties, he countered: "You were elected President of the General Assembly of the Flotilla—the men might listen to you." I am afraid that they are not much inclined to listen to me either, however.

Two of our destroyer captains will probably be dismissed by the men from their commands. The same fate is no doubt going to befall the officer commanding the flotilla. Thus the destroyers will be left with an insufficient number of officers.

On board other ships the same kind of thing is going on. On the cruisers there is a permanent meeting of the crew. There are hardly any drills or training exercises, and the ships' cleanliness leaves a great deal to be desired.

March 11/24

A very imposing celebration in memory of the victims of the Revolution has taken place. As there were no victims among the revolutionaries at Reval, there was accordingly no funeral procession. Instead it was decided to march in parade to the cemetery where the bodies of those killed and executed in 1905 were buried.

The Naval Section of the Soviet had elected me to make the arrangements for the ceremony. A committee consisting of a worker, an army Temporary Second Lieutenant, and myself was formed, which was supposed to elaborate the program of the day, the order of march for the groups that were to take part in the procession, and the program of speeches. My fellow committee members were very courteous and attentive to me; particularly the worker, who kept on repeating all the time how delighted he was to work with a naval officer whom he had always before regarded as his bitterest enemy. None of my colleagues knew where to begin and I had to do the whole job myself, including the inscriptions on the ribbons of the wreaths. The actual direction of the march of the parade I passed on to the Second Lieutenant, thereby saving myself all further trouble. The Second Lieutenant was much pleased and came to regard himself as the most important man in the city, and, perhaps, even as one of the victims of the Revolution. To my amazement, the whole parade went off very well indeed. Even in the narrowest streets there were no jams, and

that crowd of about one hundred thousand men and women reached the cemetery without any hitch or untoward incidents. On the way all kinds of revolutionary songs were sung, without much respect to the melodies or text. The military bands did their worst.

The members of the Executive Committee marched at the head of the procession with striped black and red armbands. There were flags and banners galore. After this celebration there is mighty little bunting left in the stores of Reval; the florists also did a thriving business in wreaths.

At the cemetery the floodgates of oratory were opened and there seemed no end to the speeches. The representatives of the Soviet spoke a great deal but did not distinguish themselves by their oratorical proficiency. The worst speaker was one of the officer engineers from the *Rurik*, who kept on repeating "Brethren, brethren," to the accompaniment of wild gesticulations. The Commandant of the fortress of Reval, Rear Admiral Leskov, made a very good speech in a most dignified manner.

We were all standing knee deep in snow listening to the orators. Overhead an airplane was circling, dropping red and black pennants. The bright spring sun set ablaze the red banners interspersed by the blue-crossed white naval flags waving over the enormous gray-black crowd. The national tricolor has completely disappeared at Reval. Only the red strips are left on these flags. However, our old naval St. Andrew's flag is still flying over our ships, providing thus a link with the past.

After the ceremony I went to one of the cruisers to see an officer who had just returned from Petrograd. According to him Order No. 1 had a most destructive effect at Petrograd on the armed forces of the capital. None of the subsequent orders, explanations, and revocations had any influence and failed to bolster up the discipline of the troops.

It is not clear who has the supreme military command. It is doubtful that the Grand Duke Nicholas would care to continue in that position. The Provisional Government is also not likely to leave him in charge of the conduct of military operations.

The Naval Section of the Soviet has elected me to go to Petrograd to call on the Soviet, the State Duma, and the Ministry of the Navy, in the capacity of delegate from the naval forces of Reval, in company with an enthusiastic romantic of the Revolution, the ship's clerk V., who spoke at the first meeting of the Committee on board the *Peter the Great*.

We are empowered to carry the greetings of the Reval crews and to find out what is going on in Petrograd. The most important questions are the concentration of power in the hands of one body and the matter of attitude toward the prosecution of the war. We are all aware of the dualism of power, the struggle between the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet, and have understood what a fateful influence that struggle will have on the outcome of the war. Apart from all party affiliations, the vast majority of us in Reval feel that this dualism must be abolished, but the question who should have plenary power—the Provisional Government or the Soviet—has been left in abeyance. These views are held not only by the blue-jackets but by a large portion of the officers at Reval as well. The question of victory has been placed above all party programs. Many of the senior officers share that viewpoint.

The question of the continuance of the war seems to us most urgent. Is it necessary to continue, or is it better to conclude peace? The officers feel that the war should be continued, and are indignant at the line of conduct adopted by the Petrograd Soviet and the inactivity of the Provisional Government, who have looked on without interference at the undermining of discipline and of the foundations of organization in the armed forces. The matter of clearing up these questions and of giving the viewpoint of the naval forces of Reval on them was discussed at the last meeting of the Soviet. I have had interviews with Admiral Verderevskii and with the President of the Soviet and am leaving tomorrow for Petrograd.

The attempt to induce the bluejackets to take an oath of allegiance to the Provisional Government has ended in failure. This is, of course, the result of the agitation of the Petrograd Soviet. However, the very idea of having the armed forces swear allegiance to the Provisional Government smacks of the absurd. It is impossible, having just violated the oath to one government, to swear sincerely to be loyal to another. This is both blasphemous and stupid. Personally, I have not the slightest intention of taking the oath of allegiance.

March 14/27

Petrograd does not please me at all. What is going on reminds me of that famous musical satire, the *Vampuka*. The Provisional Government keeps clamoring, "Forward! Forward!" and continues to mark time. It is impossible to team a fiery horse and a timid deer. Here are the Social Revolutionary Kerenskii and the Octobrist Guchkov in the same Cabinet. There is nothing to marvel at if they pull the cart

of the Russian state in different directions. One makes obeisance to the Soviet and his party, while the other is at heart entirely out of sympathy with the measures he himself is carrying out.

In some aspects Petrograd had changed less than I had expected. The number of buildings that have been damaged during the revolutionary days is not very great. Nevskii is, as usual, full of loafers, while government officials stroll to their offices. The dissolute appearance of the soldiers, the red flags on the buildings, the dirt in the streets—these are the things one notices at once. The food queues are lined up at the butcher's and baker's, just as before.

Immediately upon reaching Petrograd I went to the Naval Staff. Zhitkov was now acting as the assistant chief of staff. He immediately received me. Egoriev, the new Chief of Staff, came to Zhitkov's office. Soon quite a few officers congregated and they all began to cross-examine me. It was impossible to answer every question individually and I asked, therefore, permission to make a general report as to conditions prevailing at Reval. Later on I developed the same report in my talks with Guchkov, in the Executive Committee of the Soviet and in the State Duma.

My conclusions amounted to the following: There was no discipline in the navy any more and there was very little hope of it being reinstated. Only very feeble attempts were being made to carry on with the training and drill. The morale as well as the *materiel* of the navy was declining. Several scores of officers had been dismissed from the ships by the men. In this way the navy was losing a great deal in efficiency.

The only authority recognized at Reval was that of the local Soviet. To work against this body was an undertaking which had no possible chance of success, and would result in the massacre of the officers and the destruction of what measure of order it had established. To remain passive and to observe the activities of the Soviet without taking any part was also not wise, as comparatively few educated people were politically active in Reval. To leave the whole thing in the hands of a small group of workers and professional socialist politicians would be sheer stupidity. Therefore, the only proper line of action was to work in coöperation with the Soviet. This would tend to approximate the desideratum of the unity of authority and would help in gradually bridging the chasm between officers and men. In co-operating, both sides would come to know each other and would learn to respect each other's qualities. The committees already existed and it was impossible to abolish them without provoking a mutiny of the

seamen. Their work must be regulated and certain provisional laws established to govern their activities.

I further explained that rival authorities and a struggle between the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government would have a fatal influence on the outcome of the war. It was necessary to reach a consolidation of power, but not a fictitious one or one based on shallow pretense. It must have the support of the broad masses of the population. We at Reval did not presume to decide to whom the power should belong. However, should the Provisional Government prove impotent to solve the problem of governing, let it immediately cede its authority to the Soviets. Hesitation and compromise would destroy the military power of Russia.

Reval was of the opinion that it was necessary to carry on the struggle with Germany to a victorious end and that for the sake of that victory all party rivalry should be laid aside. We were not really interested in who should provide the leadership—the Provisional Government or the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Petrograd. What we wanted was to win the war, and that called for the immediate creation of a powerful central government.

When I was asked whether, in my opinion, there was a possibility of raising the discipline of the navy to the old level, I answered that I considered this impossible in the near future and that I personally had the worst premonitions, but did not consider this pessimism a sufficient reason for sitting still and remaining inactive. One must do what was within one's power and not strive to achieve goals that were obviously beyond one's reach.

The seaman, V., who accompanied me, tried to temper the picture I had drawn and assured those present that things would arrange themselves. He is a great optimist and believes that with the Revolution the Golden Age has arrived in Russia. Such idealists are really very harmful. They attract sympathy and encourage the ostriches to bury their heads still deeper in the sand.

My words were received with incredulity, and numerous reproaches were showered upon me. I was accused of making the picture darker than it actually was. I was told that a revolution was not achieved in a fortnight, and that gradually things would straighten themselves out, etc. No one brought any facts to refute what I had said. I could clearly see that we did not understand each other. The road of endless compromise, of gradual concessions, with the hope of recanting them later—this was the position of the Naval Staff. They are all very decent people, but with few exceptions they lack will

power, and their temperaments are not of the kind needed these days. They are not leaders, although Zhitkov is somewhat firmer and more energetic than the rest. However, the successes of the *sans-culottes* during the French Revolution make him think that the same thing may happen again, and that Russia's revolutionary troops may nevertheless wage a successful war with Germany.

From the Naval Staff I was directed to Rear Admiral Kedrov, the new Deputy Minister of the Navy, who is the technical head of the navy. He received us in the former study of Admiral Grigorovich. He shook the seaman's hand. At Reval this is not yet being done. At the meetings of the Soviet everybody salutes by handshakes, but not on board ships or on duty.

Kedrov listened attentively to what we had to say, but did not seem to give much credence to my pessimistic prognostications, and treated very sceptically my remarks as to the weakness of the Provisional Government. Apparently he was not feeling very comfortable in his present position. However, I do not see who else could have satisfactorily filled his post. He is the most important personality in naval circles today. In addition to that, he enjoys the best possible relations with Guchkov, and they are able to work in perfect harmony. At Kedrov's I made the acquaintance of the middle-aged Lieutenant Bobrovskii, a former member of the old revolutionary party, the People's Will, who was for many years active in the revolutionary movement. He seemed to be a very fine man, an idealist and at the same time a man who knew how to fight for his convictions. I liked him very much indeed. All my further peregrinations in Petrograd were in his company.

In all the departments of the Ministry of the Navy perfect bedlam seems to reign. The civil officials as well as the officers of the various special technical corps are holding meetings, declaring their lack of confidence in their superiors, asking for a shorter working day, and in general behaving worse than the seamen. Of course all the noise is being raised by a very small number of individuals, who are now parading their alleged liberal and socialistic ideas, while in the old days the same people were shouting from the housetops about their devotion to the throne. The decent people are intimidated; they are not accustomed to use revolutionary methods, so they are hiding and are afraid to say anything, while a few adventurers who are out for power and money are holding sway in the buildings of the Admiralty. At the Naval General Staff the situation is somewhat better but, on the other hand, they are attempting to place their own officers in all

departments of the Ministry. They are now called "the Young Turks" by the personnel of those departments. This is also acting as a disturbing element.

It was announced that the Minister of War and Navy would receive us at four o'clock in the afternoon. We arrived at the apartment of the Minister at the appointed time. A crowd of adjutants, petitioners, and generals from the central departments of the Ministry of War filled the antechamber. The majority were youngsters of the most immature type. A general conversation on current topics was going on.

Some middle-aged Second Lieutenant was orating about the newspaper that he was appointed to publish for the soldiers. He kept repeating the trite phrases that had already become tiresome about enlightenment, education, consciousness, etc. He did not advance a single new thought, nor did he make any attempt to look at the naked truth and admit that Russia was in mortal danger and perhaps on the verge of collapse.

The insipid prattle of the crowd of adjutants enraged me very much; particularly the discussions of Cornet M., who kept assuring us that his father, a member of the State Duma, had so much influence among the soldiers that entire regiments would follow him to defend the Provisional Government. They were all openly abusing the Soviets and shouting that they should be disbanded by armed force. The temper of my bluejacket became very bad, and I had difficulty in stopping him from entering into a controversy with the adjutants.

Guchkov received us fairly quickly. I repeated to him more or less the same report I had already made at the Naval Staff, laying stress on the problem of concentration of power. I thought that my words made quite an impression on him. At the end of the interview Guchkov seemed to be very nervous and his voice trembled. He told me I was painting too dark a picture, that the Provisional Government was recognized throughout Russia, and that the troops at the front had taken the oath of allegiance to it. Right here in Petrograd there were regiments who were loyal to Prince Lvov's cabinet and ready to support it by armed force. Reval was not representative of all Russia.

My answer was that Reval had also formally recognized the Provisional Government, and that the army at the front was probably being ruled by the local committees and Soviets. Rather sharply I said that this was not the moment to close one's eyes or overlook the rather terrifying reality and indulge in rosy dreams. The Provisional Government was impotent and the armed forces were rapidly

disintegrating. The Petrograd garrison was a typical example of what the entire army would very soon be.

Guchkov was amazed by my words, and exclaimed loudly: "Well, what should be done?" With those words our audience came to an end.

The bluejacket, V., was very dissatisfied with the results of our interview with Guchkov. He said, "Admiral Kedrov was much better." The pseudo-sportive attire of the Minister helped towards an unfavorable impression, adding a touch of the theatrical.

From Guchkov we went to the building of the State Duma, to the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet which was occupying part of it. The Naval Staff had provided us with an automobile decorated by a red pennant. Bumping along over the ruts of the snow-covered streets, we reached the gates of the Tauris Palace. The street was thronged with soldiers and workers. One had to push one's way to the gate through a dense crowd. The mob eyed with open hostility my naval shoulder straps, and the guards at the gate asked us to produce documents indicating our business with the Duma or the Soviet.

The corridors, halls, and offices of the Tauris Palace were overflowing with a motley crowd of untidily dressed humanity. Soldiers, workers, bluejackets, a few officers, war nurses—all these folk were running hither and thither. In some of the rooms improvised chanceries were doing work. On the doors there were notices with the names of recently formed institutions. Pieces of newspaper, cigarette stubs, shells of sunflower seeds, and the brown mud of the Petrograd streets carpeted the floor. All this created the impression of a neglected rooming house left for years without proper repair and redecoration. There was nothing left of the former cleanliness and order. The perennial Slav untidiness had taken its toll, pushing aside its borrowed culture.

We went to the Military Section of the Executive Committee of the Soviet. We were informed that N. D. Sokolov (a well-known lawyer who participated in several large political trials) would give us all the necessary explanations and would listen to what we had to say in the name of the Reval naval forces. In the meantime we were asked to wait in a hall. The small room was full to overflowing. All chairs were occupied and, taking off our overcoats, we found seats for ourselves on the table.

Two young colonels of the Izmailovskii Foot Guards were discussing with gusto the famous Order No. 1, defending its authors and trying to prove that the order was necessary. That subject was so important that I could not help interfering in their discussion, and

said that according to my own impressions the results of that order would be fatal not only to the garrison of Petrograd but to the entire Russian army. Both colonels immediately attacked me, accusing me of lack of understanding of the soldiers' psychology and saying that without that order the garrison would turn into a mob of anarchists that would lay waste the entire city of Petrograd. They spoke of the committees as most wonderful institutions, which had resulted in the creation of a powerful organization much more solid than that of the old army discipline. These ideas advanced by officers of a Guards Regiment astonished me. One of them was wounded in the head and wore a black bandage. The other was also obviously a fighting officer. Neither of them looked older than thirty.

Believing that they had been promoted to the rank of colonel since the Revolution, I asked them whether they wore their shoulder straps according to rank or because of their positions of battalion C.O.'s. Both answered in a piqued tone that they had been promoted to the rank of colonel a year before. This astonished me even more, as it meant that real fighting Guards officers could possibly believe in such an absurdity as the desirability of the destruction of discipline and the creation of some kind of militia, which had nothing similar to it in the world.

An old intellectual was attentively listening to our argument. "You are not a socialist, by any chance?" he asked suddenly. I replied that I failed to understand what relation his question had with the matter under discussion. The intellectual calmly continued: "According to all your views it is plain that you are not a socialist. What party do you belong to?"

This unceremonious cross-examination took me by surprise. In Reval we were not busy with party politics. We were united by the large concepts of freedom, the rights of man, and by the recognition of two basic points—the necessity of a strong government and the determination to continue the struggle with Germany until they were conquered. After a short pause I answered my interlocutor: "Really, I do not know to what party I should assign myself. I have lived abroad for several years and do not belong to any Russian political group, although some of the views advanced by Plekhanov interest me a great deal."

At that moment we were called into the office of the Executive Committee to see Sokolov. His black beard, gold-rimmed eyeglasses, and bulky body made at first an unfavorable impression which, however, was mitigated later. Sokolov began by verifying our docu-

ments certifying that we were duly delegated by the Reval Soviet's naval section.

After repeating what I had already said to Guchkov, I emphasized the fatal influence of Order No. 1 and said that I considered that order the principal cause of the murders of officers and of the disorganization of the armed forces.

Sokolov, visibly touched in the raw, replied drily that the murders would have occurred irrespective of the order, and followed the same argument as the colonels in the hall, adding that Order No. 2 revoked several of the paragraphs of Order No. 1 and that, besides, the order concerned only the troops of the Petrograd garrison.

To this I retorted sharply that the careless editing of the order and the poor literary ability of its author had resulted in innumerable misfortunes.

As to the Helsingfors murders and about Kronstadt, Sokolov remarked that all possible measures had been taken to calm the men, that delegates were sent to persuade them to liberate the arrested officers, and that the Executive Committee hoped to achieve success in that direction.

After expressing my dissatisfaction with these measures, I asked him point-blank why the Soviet did not insist upon the execution of its requests, instead of continuing the policy of abject petitions.

"The mood of the masses does not permit us to do this at the moment," was his answer.

With respect to the problem of the concentration of power, Sokolov, after making a brief historical survey of the formation of the Provisional Government which originated as a compromise between the State Duma and the Petrograd Soviet, stated that the Petrograd Soviet would recognize the Provisional Government only in so far as the former lived up to the conditions of the compromise, which were published in the manifesto issued upon the formation of the Lvov Cabinet. My remark that that very compromise contained in itself the seeds of civil struggle and of the decadence of the Central Government remained unanswered.

We had a long discussion about the war. Sokolov told us that several colonels of the General Staff had made a report to the Executive Committee about the situation at the front, that the committee was fully aware of the importance of the problem, but intended to try moral suasion first and hoped that the German proletariat would rise at the call of the Russian workers and destroy the power of the Hohenzollerns.

All these discussions brought me to the verge of despair. I asked Sokolov if he was a Bolshevik. He replied that he did not definitely belong to either of the factions of the Russian Social Democratic Party, but considered himself a social democrat. Bobrovskii attacked Sokolov violently with respect to the position occupied by the Petrograd Soviet, pointing out that he considered it most dangerous. To this I added that it was impossible to conduct a war while neglecting all principles of military art—destroying discipline, refusing to attack the enemy, and replacing the positions of command by persons popular with the soldiers.

The Soviet, I said, must decide the problem of war. Should it reach the conclusion that it was desirable to go on with the war, then all actions with respect to military activities should be in line with the practices of military art. The present tendency to interfere with military efficiency should be abandoned and nothing should be done to impair the remnants of the military organization.

Sokolov offered me an opportunity to express my views at the evening meeting of the Soldiers' faction of the Soviet. Upon taking leave of him we went to dine. Later on I learned that Sokolov was one of the co-authors of Order No. 1, and I understood then his nervousness during my attacks on its authors.

V. was very displeased with me and kept on saying that I was exaggerating everything and was seeing dangers where there were none, and so forth. Bobrovskii agreed with my views, and encouraged me to insist upon my points at the meeting of the Soviet as strongly as possible.

When we returned to the Tauris Palace and entered the Parliamentary Hall we found that the delegates of the soldiers' section of the Soviet were already occupying the left side of it. The center was empty, while on the right side were seated the delegates of the Executive Committee of the Officers' Union.

The social democrat, Bogdanov, was presiding. The presiding body included a naval engineer officer, a member of the Social Revolutionary Party. The appearance of the soldiers' deputies was not at all to my liking. They had no resemblance to soldiers at all. Apparently practically none of them had ever seen the front. Their faces were typical of the Petrograd industrial workers. Some had no shoulder straps on their uniforms, nearly all were dressed contrary to regulations. These delegates were quite unlike those of our Reval Soviet, which comprised many men decorated with the soldier's Cross of St.

George, and practically all of whom had taken an active part in the war.

Upon my request for the floor, the President informed me that I should be permitted to speak after the President of the Officers' Union. This meeting was the first in which officers as well as soldiers jointly participated. The Union of the Republican Officers had also sent its delegates and they occupied some of the seats in the center.

Then began the usual endless speech-making. Colonel G. in the name of the Officers' Union made a dramatic speech about the urgency of coöperation between officers and soldiers, belaboring his chest with his fists and generally behaving like a provincial ham actor. His shouting, his exaggerated gesticulations, and his words made a very unfavorable impression on me. The bluejacket, V., also disliked the Colonel's bathos.

The speakers that followed continued in the same vein. One of the soldiers said, in replying to the officers, that harmony could exist only if the officers abandoned any idea of restoring the throne. Colonel G. threw himself upon that soldier and embraced him. Several other officers did the same. I was thoroughly shocked by this cheap melodrama. I wondered what the military attachés of the Allied states were thinking, as they sat in the diplomatic box.

After these mutual assurances of love and harmony, the President gave me the floor. I began with a greeting from the Reval Soviet and immediately followed that by broaching the question of concentration of power: "We are very much perturbed by the question of the duality of the government. At Reval such duality does not exist—the Provisional Government does not function at Reval. Order prevails and affairs are progressing relatively better than here in Petrograd. Such a state cannot, however, continue indefinitely. It is imperative to have one government for the entire country. Either the Soviets should subordinate themselves unconditionally to the Provisional Government and not talk about subordination 'only as far as,' or the Provisional Government should cede the power to the Soviet. The present state of affairs is a factual anarchy and cannot continue any longer. The answer which was given to me by the Executive Committee I am unable to accept as satisfactory."

The first part of my speech was met by applause of the left flank. "Right you are! Down with the Provisional Government!" shouted gloomy industrial workers in soldiers' uniforms.

"The meeting misunderstands me. I did not speak about the over-

throw of the Provisional Government. I spoke about the formation of a unified, powerful government."

All applause ceased, and there were several displeased shouts: "We know that strong government—the hangman's rope and prisons again!"

"The Reval naval forces have decided to fight the Germans to the end, to victory, to the overthrow of the Hohenzollerns and to the elimination of the enemy throughout Russian territory. Both seamen and officers have united for that end. We are perturbed by the behavior of the Petrograd Soviet. Come out with it! Tell us plainly: Do you intend to carry on with the war or not? Let's have it right now; there is no time to waste!"

This part of my speech was very distasteful to the Executive Committee and provoked noise and catcalls from the benches at the extreme left.

Following me the bluejacket, V., spoke: "You are embracing each other here, but just the same you do not seem to have much harmony. With us at Reval things are much better. Even at the Soviet we all sit together and not separately as you do—on one side the officers, on the other the soldiers. We are all working together, instead of this endless speechifying and squabbling. We all want to fight the Germans and are not going to lay down our arms until we beat them."

After V.'s speech several officers moved and sat among the soldiers.

The presiding officer answered me at length, practically repeating what Sokolov had already said, without adding anything substantial to the thoughts expressed by the latter. Then began the discussion of the Declaration of the Soldiers' Rights. This absurd document was discussed by paragraphs. No one attempted to speak against it as a whole. The meeting went on till long after midnight.

During the intermissions I talked to some acquaintances among the delegates of the Officers' Union. They all criticized me, particularly with respect to the question of concentration of power, saying that the time was not ripe for raising that question, that the Provisional Government would gradually get stronger, etc.

After the end of the meeting, Bobrovskii, V., and I went home on foot. There were no *izvoschiks* to be found and the trolleys had ceased to run, so we had to walk along the slippery streets, going around snowdrifts and puddles of water. Bobrovskii was dissatisfied that I had not insisted more energetically upon an answer. V., on the other hand, said my arguments were not serious and that things would

get better: we would beat the Germans yet and there would be a properly organized government.

The next day we went to call upon the Military Committee of the State Duma. There we met General Potapov and one of his assistants. In my conversations with them I insisted upon the liberation of the arrested officers at Kronstadt and attempted to find out what the functions of that committee were. It was explained to me that it was a link between the Government and the Soviet. To me it seemed to be not a link but merely an entirely superfluous and stupid group of people.

Later on I went to the Naval Staff and took part there in the discussion of several questions. Among other matters I insisted upon permission for officers to wear civvies, to which Egoriev would not agree.

At the Naval General Staff I had several conflicts in connection with my views as to a central government. One officer even called me a Bolshevik. A great deal of vague idealism, coupled with a disinclination to look life in the face—this was my impression of these discussions.

The balance of my visit to Petrograd was rather trite, with the exception of the impression of the two-day meeting of the Soviet at the great Refectory Hall of the Naval College. The enormous hall, so well known to me, was filled to overflowing by thousands. Besides the members of the Soviet (I believe about two thousand) there were present numerous delegations from the provinces. A dense cloud of tobacco smoke overhead, shells of sunflower seed and cigarette butts underfoot. Right at the foot of the statue of Peter the Great, Chkheidze was haranguing the meeting, asking their approval of the now famous proclamation addressed to the proletariat of the world: "We call upon you! Shake off the yoke of your autocratic order in the same way as the Russian people have thrown off Tsarism; refuse to serve as a tool of usurpation and violence in the hands of kings, landlords, and bankers—and through harmonious, united efforts we shall stop the terrible butchery which is disgracing humanity and darkening the great days of the birth of Russian freedom! Workers of the world! We stretch out our hands to you in brotherhood across the mountains of our brothers' corpses, over rivers of innocent blood, over the smoking ruins of towns and villages, over the destroyed cultural treasures—we call upon you to rebuild and to strengthen international solidarity!"

Chkheidze spoke with a great deal of pathos, using purposely vulgar expressions which provoked the laughter and applause of the crowd.

The objections offered by the "defensists" (as were nicknamed those who wished to see the war continued to a victorious end) were listened to with scant attention, and often their voices were silenced by hissing. That crowd thought that the Russian Revolution would immediately incite a revolution in Germany and that Emperor William had only a few days to rule. To me they all seemed to be lunatics, but V. supported the motion: "Why not call on the German workers to revolt? Perhaps something might come of it."

The masses are of the opinion that there will be no more necessity to fight; that the Germans will never move to attack free Russia, that revolution in Germany is unavoidable, that the time has come to settle the internal problems—ownership of land, factories, etc. From this it will be impossible to budge them except through great privation or by practical lessons proving to them the lack of common sense of their leaders.

Tomorrow I am returning to Reval. My state of mind is very low. There is practically no hope for the success of my efforts. I must continue to bear the heavy cross and do whatever is possible. All hopes of Petrograd must be abandoned. The Soviet is run by lunatics, while the Government is led by weaklings.

March 23/April 5

Back in Petrograd again. But for entirely different reasons. Not as a plenipotentiary delegate of the Reval naval forces, but as an exile from my own ship!

Upon returning to Reval I found a considerable change for the worse. There was talk in the Soviet that its members should be limited to those belonging to Socialist parties only, and reference to information appearing in many papers, with the exception of the *Pravda* and the *Workers' Newspaper*, was being met with hisses: "Do not read any newspapers, comrades, except ours—the proletarian newspapers!"

There appeared soldiers and workers who openly called themselves Bolsheviks and were sowing dissension. Among the seamen that element was so far not very numerous. However, the crews seemed to be much agitated, and saw treason and provocation in every move. This resulted in numerous arrests and dismissals of officers from their ships. On board the *Oleg*, because of a denunciation made by one of the officers' servants, five officers were arrested and sent to Petrograd under escort. Among them were several good specialists. With respect to myself I noticed a rapidly growing distrust.

During the first days after my return to Reval I had to make several

speeches on the results of my trip. After one of such speeches at the grain elevator in the Commercial Harbor, which was attended by some three hundred men of the Destroyers' Division, I was asked whether I thought that monarchists should be permitted to preach freely their ideas. To this I answered that as long as there was freedom of speech in Russia, no law could prevent speakers of monarchistic views holding forth, but that at the present moment, as the masses were openly hostile to monarchism, I did not believe that such monarchistic propaganda was practically possible. The bluejackets were not satisfied with my answer and asked what I thought myself regarding the matter. To this I replied that all political parties should be permitted to discuss their programs freely and that I considered as noxious all attempts to undermine the principle of free speech.

Upon this, my Wireless Chief Petty Officer asked me to what party I myself belonged. This question I had been expecting from the day I returned from Petrograd. The discussion I had at the Duma had drawn my attention forcibly to it. I replied that I considered that a commanding officer should not devote himself to a partisan political activity among his own subordinates and that, therefore, I was unable to answer the question as long as I remained in command of the *Strashnyi*. The meeting disbanded shortly after that. I went on board my destroyer. On the way I was overtaken by the chairman of one of the Destroyers' Ship's Committees.

"Mr. Lieutenant, you'd better be careful of your men. There are several aboard your destroyer who are constantly working against you. They say you were too strict with the men before the Revolution."

It was noticeable to me that the men were becoming more and more estranged, but at the same time I did not know what could be done to improve the situation. As to the transfer to the Staff of the Admiral in Command of the Baltic Fleet, I had decided not to accept it, as I did not want to work on the staff of Maksimov, the new Commander of the Fleet. I had no respect for him whatsoever, and considered it beneath my dignity to be closely associated with him. Upon thinking the situation over, I went to bed without having reached any definite conclusion.

With the Ship's Committee matters did not prosper at all. There was a constant reëlection of members. Some of the elected refused to continue to work. All work on board was progressing very poorly. The Gunnery Petty Officer was working in the militia, which replaced the police at Reval. I asked him to pay some attention to the

guns and to supervise the work done on board. He replied that he had no time for that, as he was working the entire day in the militia. To my remark that perhaps he should give up his connection with the militia he answered by a definite refusal.

More than twenty-five percent had gone home on long leave, although practically all had already enjoyed a monthly leave of absence before the Revolution this winter.

The program of exercises and drills was worked out at the meeting of the Ship's Committees. All were cut down to a minimum, in spite of my protests and threats that if things continued to move in this direction I should give up my command and leave the ship.

The naval officers began to form a professional union. I think that under the circumstances this was the right step. Perhaps it would be possible to achieve something through a professional union of naval officers. A naval trade union—that is what we have come to in three weeks of revolution!

The naval section of the Soviet had begun to meet separately, working out regulations governing the functions of committees, the order of the daily routine on board, the economic problems, etc. The attitude toward the officers at the Soviet had deteriorated, although I was personally still fairly well regarded.

I had several discussions of the situation with K. He was very tired, but hoped that gradually the service routine would improve, although he was rather pessimistic as to the future of the navy. The officers' servants had grown very discourteous and untidy. The crew in general had begun to dress sloppily, ignoring regulations almost completely. The men went ashore any time they liked, merely registering their names with the quartermaster on duty. My own position was perfectly absurd. The Provisional Government had not abrogated naval regulations. At the same time I was powerless to do anything to restore discipline on board. Persuasion did not work any more, and power I had none.

The Commanding Officer of the Destroyers' Division offered me the position of Senior Staff Officer. This offer was very acceptable indeed, as it solved for me the problem of command. I should have no seamen to deal with, with the exception of a few clerks and signalmen of the staff.

However, yesterday fate decided quite differently. In the morning helmsman Ribson, who was a member of the Ship's Committee, came to see me. He told me he was resigning from the committee because of constant accusations of siding with the officers, of reporting to them

what was going on, etc. He begged me to take him to the Staff of the Division. I agreed to his request.

Soon after Ribson left the boatswain came and reported that the crew wanted to speak to me. The men were assembled in the fore-castle and were quite noisy. They hardly acknowledged my greetings.

Engine-room Artificer Sand stepped forward and said that the crew had heard that I was trying today to persuade Ribson to help me blow up the ship and attack the men. I recalled that during my conversation with Ribson one of the officers' servants, Muzyka, was loafing near the door of my room, trying to overhear the conversation.

To this I replied that I had discussed with Ribson entirely different matters concerning the latter's transfer to the Staff of the Division, where, as was known to them, I was supposed to go in the near future.

"Besides," I added, "the doors were open. I was making no secret of our conversation."

"That would be the last straw, secret conferences behind closed doors," commented Sand sarcastically.

This got me very angry, and I retorted that I did not intend to serve on the same ship with people who were probably former spies of the *Okbrana*, and I would leave the ship immediately.

Then the Torpedo Petty Officer, Ocheret, took the floor and said that the crew were very grateful to me for my former service but requested me to leave the ship, as they considered that I was displeased with the lack of discipline on board and would some day revenge myself upon the crew by blowing up the ammunition magazines or "by taking the destroyer into some hopeless attack upon a German ship in order to kill us all. We know your temper. You would not spare yourself in deciding our fate!"

Sand said that Ribson could not very well have asked me about a transfer to the Staff of the Division, since he had constantly incited the crew against me. These words were rather startling, as I had always tried to help Ribson, to give him a chance for promotion and make his service on board as pleasant as possible.

Thereupon I turned on my heel and left the fore-castle without any farewell to the men. In my room I sat down to write a memorandum to the Commanding Officer of the Division informing him that the men had declared their lack of confidence in me and that I was asking therefore to be relieved of my duties and placed on the reserve list. Meanwhile my servant was packing my belongings. Upon completing my memorandum I pinned on my senior decoration, put on the

dress belt, and went to make farewell calls on my superior officers. They were all very surprised to learn the news, as I was considered one of the most popular officers of the flotilla. The Commanding Officer of the Division asked me to stay and come to live on board the flagship pending the issuance of orders as to my new appointment. I thanked him, but declined to remain with the Division, as I did not want to suffer further insults from the men or to undermine the authority of the Commanding Officer of the Division by my presence at the head of his staff.

Many officers were openly envious of me.

"You're a lucky dog! You won't have to commit suicide when our crews decide to surrender to the Germans," said one of the officers in taking leave of me.

My own officers were touchingly attentive and came to the station to see me off. I have kept the best possible memory of them. Their comradely attitude and devotion to duty were a great help to me during these difficult weeks of command after the Revolution.

At the station I met X., who commanded one of our destroyers stationed at Helsingfors. He had also been dismissed by the crew. We decided to go to Petrograd together. The train was full of seamen and soldiers. The porters with difficulty found an upper berth for us, and we both climbed up and stayed there until we reached Petrograd. In our compartment there were eleven passengers, so that there was no room to move.

Our train reached Petrograd considerably behind schedule. There were no porters at the station, the *izvoschiks* were also absent because of the celebration of the funerals of victims of the Revolution. Leaving most of our baggage at the station, we took our handbags and went home on foot. At Voznesenskii Avenue, near the Alexander Market, a huge crowd barred the way. There was an enormous procession moving along Sadovaia Street with a military band and banners at the head of it. We made a detour, but near the barracks of the Naval Guards we ran into another procession and stood for about half an hour watching it pass.

There was perfect order. The crowd behaved remarkably well. The columns of the processions moved in regular intervals and apparently in accordance with a well-worked-out plan. Signals were given by small white flags, and according to these signals the column would stop or resume the march. Over the columns red coffins were swinging, encircled with red banners with various slogans.

From time to time they sang "You Fell Victims in the Fatal Struggle" and "Memory Eternal." Groups of armed workers with red arm-bands were part of the procession, as well as troops, groups of students, and women.

That procession made a deep impression on me. I could not help remarking to X.: "If the Soviets succeed in keeping order like this in the future it will be impossible to return to the past."

We had to cross the Neva on the ice as all bridges were filled with marching columns. Finally I reached my parents' home. My family were astonished to see me back in Petrograd again.

There were practically no officers to be seen in the streets that day and very few well-to-do people. Apparently they all stayed at home and did not venture forth. When I was passing the columns of armed workmen, unfriendly remarks and shouts were hurled at me from the ranks.

So I am no longer commanding a destroyer. All my conscious life I have hoped to be in charge of one of those fleet craft, and now, having reached that goal, I have lost it again—perhaps for ever—together with all I was striving for. I doubt that I shall serve again in the fleet during this war. However, *quien sabe?*

March 29/April 11

At the Naval Staff there was a great deal of wondering and head-shaking as to my dismissal from the destroyer. A good many were quite pleased: "Behold the people's tribune chased out by the blue-jackets from his ship!" The senior officers—at least some of them—were even disinclined to be seen in conversation with me. There was a chance they might be compromised by being seen in such company. Fancy being caught having anything to do with an officer accused of an attempt to blow up his own ship! A most notable counter-revolutionary, indeed. In contrast to that, I found at the Naval General Staff a telegram from the men of the Staff of the Destroyers' Division expressing their regret as to the behavior of the crew of the *Strashnyi* and inviting me to return to the Division. To this message, which warmed the cockles of my heart, I replied by thanking those who signed it and saying that I considered it impossible to return to the fleet before the committee of the *Strashnyi* was court-martialed for criminal agitation against me.

The more I think of it, the more likely it seems to me that during this war I shall never be afloat again. At any rate I shall not agree to

return to the fleet as an officer—that would be too humiliating. I should feel like a truant domestic who, having once been dismissed, can be dismissed again at the whim of his masters.

Today I have seen the Baroness von Vietinhoff. She spoke to me about the Helsingfors holocaust of naval officers. It was a nightmare of brutality and cowardice.

The Baroness worked as a war nurse and came to the mortuary to which the bodies of killed officers were carried. The bluejackets were checking the names off the list to see whether all those condemned were already killed. As she walked in, some scoundrel asked her:

“Are you perchance waiting for your husband? Well, you won’t have to wait long. He’ll be brought here quite soon.”

These men prevented any help being given to the wounded, undressed the bodies of the killed and stripped them of all valuables. When Admiral Nepenin’s body was brought in it was placed in a standing position against the wall, with a cigarette thrust into the mouth, while along the opposite wall were lined up the corpses of other officers, their stiff hands adjusted in the gesture of salute.

“Here is your staff, Admiral,” these brutes remarked. Nepenin’s widow was not admitted to the mortuary and was grossly insulted by the murderers. The poor woman could not stand the shock and had to be sent to a sanatorium for treatment.

Lieutenant L. was tortured for a long time before he was killed. His fingers were whacked off one by one and long needles were driven into his body. He behaved very bravely and merely asked to be killed as soon as possible. Many of my friends from the Destroyers’ Division were killed by the men from the battleships. These murderers came at night, summoned the officers on deck and shot them as they emerged from their rooms.

Potemkin managed to hold out successfully in a real siege. He closed the armed covers of the portholes of his destroyer’s Wardroom, and the bluejackets did not dare to run the gauntlet of his pistol fire, so that he managed to survive the massacre in a most miraculous fashion. Ryzhei, who was at Reval in the first days of the Revolution, was arrested as soon as he came to Helsingfors and had to undergo all kinds of humiliations. He committed suicide by throwing himself down the well of a staircase.

Maksimov, the new Commanding Admiral, behaved ignominiously during all those murders, reaching the depths of egotism and pusillanimity. The Provisional Government did not do anything to punish the murderers of Admiral Nepenin, who had been one of the first

to recognize it and call upon the Baltic Fleet to give allegiance to it. The blood of our comrades will fall not only on the heads of the bluejackets who assassinated them, but also on those of the garrulous liberals who did not insist on the punishment of those responsible for the dastardly deed. They have withdrawn into their shells, but some day the officers will show that they are not minded to break lances in a fight for a cowardly Government.

The conversation with the Baroness von Vietinhof made a very strong impression on me. Although I knew before about some of the episodes of the Helsingfors carnage, this, the first complete and vividly told story of these gory days, I heard for the first time today.

Here end my notes, with the exception of the part dealing with my service with the American Mission which finds its place in the next chapter. At the present time I think differently of many events that are referred to in these pages, but I am leaving them without modification, just as they were when I read them to a small group at Professor Onou's in London.

WITH THE AMERICAN MISSION

THE last pages of my 1917 notes contain some references to the Special Diplomatic Mission of the United States which was sent by President Wilson to greet the new-born Russian democracy. My views have changed considerably since I wrote those pages, but I prefer to quote them as they stand, in order to convey the impressions of that time rather than the retrospective views of 1938.

Petrograd

June 12/25, 1917

My diary has long been neglected. One of the reasons for this is that life has recently been uneventful and I have had very little opportunity of seeing anything that could not be found in the columns of the daily press. Perhaps the main reason, however, has been the reaction following the tense events of the Reval days and the falling off of my nervous energy, combined with disillusionment as to the future of the navy. All this has made me rather indifferent to what was going on around me. I have lived from day to day, gone sometimes to political public meetings, read the newspapers, visited theatres occasionally, and made two or three week-end trips out of town.

The process of decay continues. Those at the fountainhead of power do not seem to notice it, or perhaps are pretending not to notice it.

At first I made no plans for the future, but later began to think of going to America and of the possibility of finding employment abroad. I saw no sense in trying to do anything in Russia at that time, as I considered that all that was being done under the Provisional Government was doomed to perish, and I felt that I simply could not start any constructive work as long as I was obsessed by that thought.

On several occasions I was offered different appointments in the navy. I remained, however, true to my decision not to accept any position until a court was appointed to inquire into the orders for my dismissal from the command of the *Strashnyi*. On one occasion the Naval Staff exercised pretty strong pressure upon me to accept one of these appointments. I wrote a detailed memorandum explaining my position and asserting that I was not refusing active service and was ready to serve in the ranks either of the army or the navy, but that until a court-martial had been appointed to look into the conduct of the crew of the *Strashnyi* and the circumstances of my dismissal from her command, I was not willing to undertake an officer's duties either afloat or in the administration ashore.

Kerenskii made an autograph notation on that memorandum: "I beg you to remain in the service." This to me sounded rather pusillanimous.

A few days ago I was asked to report at the Naval Staff, and Captain Egoriev, its chief, asked me whether I would agree to be attached to the Special Diplomatic Mission of the United States which was due to reach Petrograd soon, via Vladivostok. Egoriev was very insistent that I should accept the position, pointing out that the Ministry did not have at the moment any suitable officer in the active service whom they could appoint. At first I was rather loath to accept that offer, but in the end, largely because of pressure brought to bear upon my father, I agreed, on certain terms. Among the stipulations were that I should wear "civvies" while on duty, that I be given an automobile with a reliable chauffeur, a private office at the Naval Staff quarters, and a secretary-stenographer. All these conditions were granted. On the day of the arrival of the Mission I went to the Nicholas railway station with Captain X. of the Naval General Staff. We rode in the staff car over the bumpy pavement of the Nevskii, which has not been repaired this year. On our way we got into a rather rambling discussion of the political situation. X. was frankly indignant at my views. He told me of his frequent visits to the open-air meetings held by the Bolsheviki near the Kshesinskaia Palace and of his arguments with the Bolshevik speakers. According to X. he had quite often succeeded in worsting them in debate, and enjoined me to follow his example. He violently attacked the monograph I had written regarding the rebellions in the British Navy in the eighteenth century, which he had seen in manuscript. He insisted that even the word "rebellion" should never be mentioned, and underlined the import of the word "revolution." All his arguments seemed to me rather spurious and

superficial, the product of a very immature mind. In any event, he was obviously an opportunist and a wishful thinker.

At the station we found an untidily uniformed guard of honor furnished by one of the Guard regiments. Several General Staff colonels from Kerenskii's entourage were also there, as well as a few Foreign Office officials. Later on Terestchenko, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Pokrovskii, the last incumbent of that post under the Tsar, joined the group. The American Embassy turned out in full force.

The station buildings looked unkempt and filthy. This whole attempt to stage a ceremonial reception of the representatives of a trans-oceanic democracy left an unpleasant taste in the mouth, it was obviously so sloppily managed.

The train was considerably late in arriving. The numerous members of the Mission and their retinues finally emerged from their cars, cameras clicked, the officer in command called the guard of honor to attention. There was no military band with the guard. It was probably playing at some public meeting and refused to be bothered. The guests passed the guard without even noticing it. Apparently its untidy khaki blended perfectly with the dirty yellow walls of the station.

Seats in the automobiles were assigned in a somewhat haphazard manner. Then we all went to the Winter Palace, where the Mission was housed. The Foreign Office was supposed to take care of the rooms, the food, the transportation, and the ceremonial part of the visit. Count P. was appointed to look after all that. The results were not entirely satisfactory. There was frequently a lack of means of transportation, sometimes there were food crises, while the ceremonial end left a great deal to be desired. I must add that the fault did not entirely lie with P. The background and conditions of life in Petrograd today are entirely unsuitable for brilliant receptions. The Government, moreover, did not do their job, and were very lax in their arrangements.

In my car I had H. C. Curl, the naval doctor attached to the Mission, Lieutenant Alva Bernhard, U.S.N., Admiral Glennon's aide, and the former American naval attaché at Petrograd, Captain Newton A. McCully, U.S.N.

When we reached the Palace it was very strange for me to see the court footmen and *Suisses* in their uniforms minus the armorial buttons which had been cut off. After some misunderstandings and delays the Mission was installed in the two "halves"—the large suites of

rooms reserved for them. It occurred to me that the more sensitive and better bred among our guests must feel somewhat uneasy and not quite at home in the Emperor's palace. After all, it was rather like breaking into someone's house without even a "by your leave."

The personnel of the Mission is numerous and rather motley. Apparently President Wilson was guided by abstract ideas far removed from the realities of life when he selected the ambassador and seven ministers who composed the Special Mission.

At the head of the delegation is Elihu Root, one of the pillars of the Republican Party, conservative, elderly, and a very able lawyer with a long and distinguished political career behind him. In his time he had been regarded even as presidential timber. In the way of political ideas he is miles away from President Wilson. For his age he is well preserved and vigorous. However, it will be pretty strenuous for him to carry the burden of the endless discussions, the long trips through Russia, the strange food and unaccustomed climate. He is accompanied by the military and the naval representatives—Major General Hugh L. Scott, U.S.A., and Rear Admiral James H. Glennon, U.S.N. Scott is an old campaigner, well versed in the psychology of the primitive tribes he has conquered and ruled. He is also a clever diplomat and has helped a great deal in liquidating the Mexican embargo. He is, however, very old and physically somewhat decrepit. Glennon was formerly the very efficient Captain of the *Wyoming*, and received the "Best Ship" prize. Lately he has been in command of the Washington Navy Yard.

The socialist of the Mission—Charles Edward Russell—is a man of rather moderate views. He considers himself a socialist theoretician although he is far from well read in Marxian literature. He has not even read the complete edition of *Kapital*. He is surrounded by several long-haired individuals who fill his head with all kinds of nonsense. I have had several talks with him—mostly at table—and have come to the conclusion that his views are set and that the long-haired crew are leading him by the nose, so that he will never listen to any reasonable argument.

James Duncan, who represents organized labor, is a stupid and vulgar person practically devoid of manners. I fail to understand how a man of that type could be selected to go on a mission. Part of the Mission personnel openly ignore him.

Cyrus McCormick, representing industry, is a cunning old merchant intent on looking after the interests of his harvesters. I doubt if

he is very much concerned with anything outside of the affairs of his own firm. He also is rude and his manners leave a great deal to be desired.

Dr. John R. Mott, of the Y.M.C.A., is a very pleasant, mild-mannered man, very much like a clergyman of a well-to-do parish. He is genuinely anxious to help Russia and makes a good impression by his sincerity.

Charles R. Crane from Chicago is a well-known Russophile and maintains at his own expense the Cathedral Choir of the Russian Church in New York. He looks like a very absent-minded person, always immersed in thoughts and dreams. Despite this, he seems to be the only member of the Mission who has a more or less clear idea of what it is all about.

Here ends the part of the diary still in my possession.

One of the principal members of the Mission, Mr. Samuel R. Bertron, the banker, seems somehow to have escaped these somewhat harsh criticisms penned twenty-one years ago. I am unable now to recollect clearly what impression that Minister, who represented the financial life of the United States, made on me at the time. My occasions for speaking to him were few, and I only faintly recollect that he was very much impressed by the lack of information among the Russians as to the American share in carrying on the war, and kept stressing the necessity of broadcasting to the Russian public President Wilson's declaration and other material, in order to enlighten them as to the important part played by the United States in shouldering the burden of the struggle against the Central Powers.

As I glance over the lines of the diary dealing with some of the members of the Mission I must plead guilty of judging them superficially and with undue asperity. My ignorance of American standards and manners led me to misinterpret their behavior.

Beside the principal representatives, my job brought me in close contact only with the naval staff. The other *dis minoris* I did not come to know well. I would like to mention, however, a very remarkable man whom I knew slightly before meeting him as the assistant secretary of the Mission. Major Stanley Washburn was much better qualified for his duties than many of the other members. Because of his knowledge of Russian life, and particularly the understanding of the Russian military he had acquired as a war correspondent at the Russian front, Washburn was undoubtedly very valuable both to Senator Root and the other principal representatives. The Russians liked him

very much. He could get along, as far as I could observe, with almost any type of Russian the Mission had to deal with, from the stiff-necked generals to the members of the Workers' Soviets.

From the very beginning I was somewhat puzzled as to what were the real motives behind the sending of such a large and heterogeneous mission to Russia. While I knew that President Wilson was somewhat inclined to flamboyant gestures, the various conversations I had with members of the American colony at the numerous teas and luncheons that preceded, accompanied, and followed the visit of the Mission led me to believe it was something more than a mere matter of extending a gargantuan welcome to a young democracy and that there were some quite concrete and realistic reasons for Senator Root's journey across the Pacific.

In fact there were grounds for more than a vague suspicion that plans were being discussed for sending troops from America to Russia. The idea apparently was that the presence of democratic, patriotic, and at the same time disciplined soldiers from the United States would act beneficially on the morale of the Russian army, and that perhaps their presence might serve as an inducement for the Provisional Government to wage the war in a more energetic fashion, and also serve as a protection in case of an emergency created by the so-called anarchists.

However, at the outset of my duties I was not concerned with such grave and complicated questions. Admiral Glennon was very much surprised and even somewhat indignant to see that I, the Russian naval attaché of the Mission, came to meet him not in uniform but in "civvies." He simply could not understand that at my age and in time of war I was not on the active list, and all my attempts to explain my repugnance to wearing an officer's uniform in the streets of Petrograd were unavailing. Even the fact that I did my best to offset the lack of gold braid by donning my cutaway (of a fairly recent London vintage), supplemented by a still quite presentable silk hat—which, by the way, was probably the only one worn by a Russian in the streets of Petrograd on that day—failed to soothe his ruffled feelings.

After seeing the Admiral and the other naval members of the Mission to their rooms, I made a round of the several principal representatives to see whether they were tolerably comfortable in their suites, and then took Dr. Curl and Lieutenant Bernhard for supper to the still fairly well-run "Content," where I was reasonably certain to be able to give them a good meal.

The uniforms of my guests attracted universal attention as we entered the restaurant, and the famous Rumanian violinist who was conducting the orchestra immediately caught on and greeted us with a selection of American jazz tunes.

As we sat over our *hors d'œuvres* and vodka, which was served in cups in deference to the myth that prohibition was still in effect in the country, my guests told me something about their trip. I was amused to hear about the unpleasantness they had experienced at Vladivostok. It appears that a number of Russian revolutionaries who had found asylum in the United States prior to the downfall of Tsarism had landed at that port a few days before the arrival of the Mission. By way of expressing their gratitude to the United States for hospitality received, these gentlemen began to incite the soldiery and the proletariat of Vladivostok against the Mission, trying to prevent their proceeding to Petrograd. However, the Vladivostok Soviet would have nothing of it, and in no way interfered with the Americans' plans.

My new friends were considerably puzzled by what was going on in Russia. The words of the official report to the Secretary of State probably summarize their views and those of their principals quite accurately: "Indeed the general impression of the new-found freedom among the Russian people appears to be that each individual was entitled to do whatever he himself wished to do, free from any control to which he personally did not consent."

Later, when I read that sentence in the thick volume published by the Department of State, I thought it was a fairly good description of the prevailing mood in Russia at the time, and marveled at the frankness of the Ambassador.

Both Dr. Curl and Lieutenant Bernhard were quite bewildered by their strange impressions of the trip from Vladivostok, the lack of even elementary discipline among the soldiery, the number of political parties struggling for power, the symbiosis of the Provisional Government with the Soviet, and by their first glimpse of Petrograd, all of which differed entirely from their expectations. Both were tremendously interested in what was going on in Russia and most anxious to do all they could to help.

In the luminous twilight of the Petrograd white night I took my tired guests back to the Palace. Even the famous Rumanian's violin could not keep them up late that evening.

On the next day began the round of the usual somewhat hollow official receptions. The first of these took place at the Foreign Office,

on June 14. On that day the American Ambassador gave expression to a frankly "Fourth of July" mood and orated impassionedly about the twenty thousand miles the Mission had journeyed to extend greetings from "one hundred million freemen." He did not realize, probably, that the Russians at that time were not as fond of figures and statistics in general as American business men. He persisted in calling the Mission "Commission," and stressed that it was composed of "patriotic, unselfish Americans, who represent every party organization in the United States and every phase of political belief." Since I and a few of the other Russians present had heard something of Eugene Debs, this statement made us wonder. Later the Ambassador followed this up by the really amazing utterance that "there are no classes in our country," and I noticed a few furtive grins among the solemn faces of the audience.

Terestchenko, the youthful head of the Foreign Office, made a very creditable speech in excellent English, which sounded to me quite moderate and fell far short of the aspirations of the leaders of the Soviet in the field of foreign policy. Apparently President Wilson thought otherwise, for on June twenty-seventh the Secretary of State cabled to Ambassador Francis that the President suggested "that it is not advisable for members of the Mission to speak of the terms of peace, or of the settlements which will be insisted upon by the United States. The President is reserving all such utterances until very different circumstances arise, and hopes that you will pursue the same policy." Thus a chance to offer Germany acceptable terms, and incidentally save Russia from Bolshevism, was thrown away.

Next day, there was the reception of the Mission by the entire body of the Provisional Government at the Mariinskii Palace, the former home of the Imperial Council of State. The American guests were formally garbed; the cabinet ministers, with Prince Lvov, the Premier, at their head, were, on the contrary, dressed in their everyday clothes. The Prince himself had on a badly cut sack suit, and some of the ministers wore shirts with soft collars and looked as if they had slept in their clothes. Here was democracy greeting democracy with a vengeance, with not a pair of well-shined shoes among them, with the exception of Terestchenko.

The gorgeous background of the Palace provided a very unsuitable setting for these two rather disparate groups. Senator Root delivered that night a very remarkable speech which led me to understand more clearly the aims of the Mission. Particularly the sentence: "So America sends another message to Russia—that we are going to fight and

have already begun to fight for your freedom equally with our own, and we ask you to fight for our freedom equally with yours."

Thus the real aim of the Mission made its appearance: to bolster up the faltering Russian front—not only its fighting forces with fresh troops, but to strengthen as well the morale of the Russian armies, particularly in the large cities. Hence the presence of Russell and Duncan, whose business it was to persuade the Russian socialists and workers to be more warlike and keep the country in the struggle against Germany.

Terestchenko replied to Root, and while he was still talking, one of the Ministers, I believe it was Peshekhonov, approached me and said quite audibly: "Young man, will you please tell these Americans that we are tired of this war. Explain to them that we are weary of the long and bloody struggle."

When I recovered from my amazement, I replied: "Citizen Minister, I will not translate your words. It is for the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to express the Government's views on foreign policy on an occasion like the present. If you want to say something in your private capacity, you should choose a different time and place."

The idea of the Cabinet's solidarity, of loyalty to his chief, was entirely alien to that member of Lvov's Cabinet. It provided the final touch of the grotesque to cap my impressions of that shirt-sleeved reception.

The first glimpses of Petrograd apparently were depressing, as Senator Root cabled to the Secretary of State two days after the reception at the Mariinskii Palace: "Conditions here critical. General St. Petersburg opinion very pessimistic; industrial and financial conditions bad" . . . and recommended expenditure of funds for propaganda up to five million dollars.

Contact with the members of Lvov's government led Root to cable: "Please say to the President that we have found here an infant class in the art of being free, containing one hundred and seventy million people, and they need to be supplied with kindergarten material."

As later events have shown, Lenin understood better what kind of kindergarten material that class wanted. At that time, however, the Mission still clung to the idea that "the Provisional Government seems secure; no visible agitation against it at present." What made the head of the Mission suppose that the Provisional Government was firmly in the saddle is a riddle I am unable to solve. I do not believe that the more realistically inclined members of the Mission shared that view.

From these receptions, and having introduced Admiral Glennon and his staff to Admiral Kedroff, the then technical head of the Ministry of the Navy, I turned to the preparations for the trip to Sebastopol which Admiral Glennon was anxious to undertake in order to meet Admiral Kolchak and to inspect the Black Sea Fleet. In those days the comparatively brief journey to the Crimea called for preparations such as one makes for an expedition into some wild, remote region.

The Minister of War's private railroad car was placed at my disposal. I inspected it thoroughly to make certain that the ubiquitous bugs had not taken possession, and made the acquaintance of the two guards attached to the car.

Then I went to Donon's and ordered a large supply of provisions, to last if necessary for the round trip: roasted chickens, cold meats of all kinds, hams, salmon, sturgeon, caviar, and all sorts of hors d'œuvres as well as a large number of loaves of bread. The next trip was to the official in charge of the Palace cellars. I obtained from him several bottles of very old Bourbon (probably the only place where that kind of Bourbon was procurable), some Scotch whiskey, and an assortment of wines and liqueurs, and crowned the day's work by swapping a couple of bottles of Scotch for some Schweppe's soda which a fortunate British friend of mine still possessed.

Senator Root's views about the kindergarten were shared and applied, by most of the members of the Mission, to various phases of Russian life. There was among them a general feeling that the Russians were a lot of likable but unreliable and sometimes very naughty children. It was thought that in every walk of life the Big Brother—Uncle Sam—should not only proffer help but was at liberty to express himself as to our shortcomings in a manner that any red-blooded American would violently resent, were he the recipient of such remarks.

One of my first impressions of the Mission was obtained in a talk with one of the senior attachés who, in all seriousness, lectured me on the prevalence of syphilis in Russian villages and on the general lack of moral restraint among Russians of all classes. When I asked this censor of the *mores* of my native land where he had obtained his information and who had checked his statistics, he became quite indignant at my appalling ignorance of generally accepted facts and my failure to appreciate the necessity of doing something about it right away.

The subject of Rasputin and his doings (real and fictitious) was a practically inexhaustible mine for conversational material. Nearly

every discussion began and ended with it. The general impression was that almost every Russian society woman in Petrograd was only too glad to be favored by the burly Siberian peasant. All attempts to introduce a truer perspective as to the actual facts (which, granted, were lurid enough) were met with ill-concealed scepticism.

In so far as the Russian army and navy were concerned, still another angle was added: All senior officers were either grafters, incompetents, or libertines, interested only in making love to ballerinas. It was fairly plain to me that our guests regarded as freaks those of us they came in contact with and learned to know a little better, such exceptions merely proving the general rule about the wickedness of Imperial officers.

Furthermore, while they heard every day tales about the disorganization of supplies and the lack of common commodities in Petrograd and the almost complete absence of imported goods, they were greatly surprised when some liquid or solid refreshment served them was not entirely to their liking. Several of our guests were not backward in expressing before Russians who understood English their wishes to "get some real honest-to-goodness food, like what we are accustomed to at home."

On the whole the attitude of some members of the Mission was not unlike that of a lot of missionaries descending, let us say, in the beginning of the nineteenth century upon a tribe of benighted savages on some Pacific island to bring to them the blessings of the white man's civilization and deriving a great deal of satisfaction from the flattering notion that the Lord had made them from other clay than the poor heathens they were about to proselytize.

To me this attitude was galling in the extreme, and I had to remind myself time and again that I was the host, that my interlocutors were my country's guests, and that I must restrain my temper.

This was of course not true of the regular staff of the American Embassy in Petrograd, especially the naval and military attachés, who knew enough of Russia and the Russians not to share the views and feelings of the "missionaries." They well understood what a terrible strain the country had been subjected to during the three years of war, and interpreted the Revolution and its consequences in a somewhat less naïve way than ascribing all the trouble to the personal worthlessness of the Russian officers and civil servants.

An event that at least disabused the naval members of the Mission of the fallacy of regarding all Russians as incompetents was the trip to the great Obukhov Works lying a few miles up the Neva from Petro-

grad. This trip was undertaken on one of the days when we were in Petrograd, between the longer journeys to the various theatres of naval warfare.

We started up the Neva on a beautiful, clear day. The blue ripples of the tiny river wavelets lapped at the polished mahogany of the ministerial steam launch. Even the brass was highly polished.

My American friends enjoyed this run up the river very much as it afforded them an interesting view of Petrograd, and by the time we reached the Obukhov Works we were all in a very amiable mood.

The manufacturing of the well-designed naval sixty-caliber four-inch naval guns fascinated Glennon, who himself was no mean ordnance expert. The ambitious design of these guns and what I told him of their ballistic properties impressed him very much. The huge machine tools boring tubes for the twelve-inch guns, the excellent equipment of the shops, the foundries—all were a source of surprise and wonder to Admiral Glennon, and he frankly told me: "Why, I never expected that you had anything like that in Russia. This is a most remarkable plant, and the skill of the engineers and workers is extraordinary."

He inquired whether there were any foreign engineers employed at the plant and was amazed to learn that there was not a single foreign engineer on the staff of the works.

The Obukhov workers were obviously not at all defeatistically inclined, at the time of our visit. They received the naval members of the American Mission with considerable enthusiasm.

In one of the shops a large group of workers was assembled to greet the American guests. After Glennon spoke briefly and his speech had been translated into Russian, the workers cheered lustily for America and the Americans. This mood of the workers was quite beyond my expectations. I had not realized before that at one of the largest industrial plants of Petrograd the workers were so thoroughly imbued with the necessity of an energetic pursuance of the war.

The inspection of the Obukhov Works gave to the naval members of the Mission an entirely different slant on the Russian munition industry. They came to realize that Russia had good engineers and highly skilled workmen able to design and turn out the most complicated pieces of naval armament and equipment. They were enthusiastic about the mood of the improvised reception given them by the workers and, I am afraid, generalized the impression of that visit to Obukhov with respect to the conditions of Russian heavy industry.

The first part of the trip was fairly uneventful, with two exceptions.

We ran out of Schweppe's long before we reached Sebastopol. The weather was unusually warm for the time of year, and the excellence of the Bourbon encouraged the consumption of soda. I soon realized that I had made a mistake in my calculations of our capacity in that respect and tried to replenish our supply of mineral water by purchases at the station restaurants. Unfortunately there was nothing in the way of soft drinks available, with the exception of some poor local seltzer water. This was quite upsetting, particularly to Admiral Glennon, who did not take kindly to the Russian brand of soda water.

The next incident occurred at one of the larger stations beyond Moscow. There was an inordinately large crowd of soldiers on the platform, all intent on going somewhere, regardless apparently of the direction of the train. As I opened the door of our car, followed by one of the American naval officers, a large beefy soldier without shoulder straps on his tunic made to rush the car, shouting to others to follow him and "throw the damn bourgeois out!" I realized what his success would mean as soon as I saw him, and as there was not time to lock the door I swung out, hit him squarely on the jaw, and threw him off the step of the car. He accepted his defeat, and with muttered curses disappeared in the crowd.

Because of this incident my stock skyrocketed among my fellow travelers. Apparently my American colleagues did not expect that there was any fight left in a Russian officer, and were genuinely surprised at the turn of events. They would have been still more surprised had they known that this was the first time in my life I had hit anyone in the face!

The morning we were approaching Sebastopol, I noticed that the trains we passed at the stations were crowded with well-dressed people obviously agitated and nervous. I saw a naval officer on one of those trains going from Sebastopol north, and went out to speak to him to find out what was causing this exodus. He told me that the bluejackets had got out of hand, that Kolchak had been arrested by the Soviet, and that men were disarming officers.

The moment of the American naval representatives' visit to the Black Sea Fleet was obviously far from auspicious. I inwardly cursed the Polyannas of the Naval General Staff who had failed to foresee the trend of events even a couple of days in advance.

However, it was too late to turn back. I outlined briefly to Admiral Glennon what I had heard and suggested that as long as we had gone so far we might just as well go on to Sebastopol and see what was actually happening there. Admiral Glennon agreed, and we set-

tled down to breakfast while we watched the majestic panorama of the sea and the approaches to Sebastopol.

In addition to Admiral Glennon, the group in our car included Captain Newton McCully, who was formerly the American naval attaché at Petrograd and had just turned over his duties to the newly appointed incumbent, Commander Walter S. Crosley, who also accompanied Admiral Glennon on this trip. Both these distinguished naval officers were very remarkable men who later became admirals and held some of the highest commands in the United States Navy. McCully endeared himself to thousands of Russians by his humanness, his willingness to help to the limits of his ability in the tragic days of the evacuation of the Black Sea ports during the Civil War. Later he adopted several Russian orphans whom he brought over to America and educated at his own expense.

Walter S. Crosley honored me with his friendship from the moment we met in Russia. From the first I was struck by his ability, his manliness, his good judgment, and that intangible something that makes a good naval officer the world over.

Alva Bernhard, Admiral Glennon's aide, made an excellent impression on me by his tact and remarkable common sense. During that trip we got to know each other quite well and I came to like him very much.

We were finishing our breakfast as the train pulled into the Sebastopol station. I went to look for the reception committee and noticed a group of three naval officers, a sailor, and a worker apparently waiting for the Mission. I introduced myself to the senior naval officer in the group and the latter acquainted me briefly with the situation at Sebastopol. Admiral Kolchak was not under arrest, but was bereft of any power and was being recalled to Petrograd by the Government. He also explained to me that the reception committee included representatives of the Soviet, and wound up by saying that they would be glad to do what they could under the circumstances to welcome the American naval representatives and show them as much of the fleet as they wished to see.

The picture was clear. The Black Sea Fleet, the last citadel of order and discipline of the Russian navy, had been captured by the Bolsheviks. While its best public speakers were touring the army front exhorting the soldiers to continue the war, some emissaries from Kronstadt and Petrograd had succeeded in boring into the local Soviet from within and had gained the confidence of the seamen.

Having presented the naval officers to Admiral Glennon and his

staff, I left to the former the task of introducing the Soviet delegates. I felt that in my capacity as the representative of the Government with the American Mission I could not very well have any direct relations with delegates of a body in open revolt against it. Then I told Admiral Glennon that I was leaving him in the hands of the reception committee and Admiral Lukin, the Commanding Admiral of the Fleet who had taken Kolchak's place, and would go over to the Fleet Staff to find out how things really were, and whether it was safe for the Mission to remain in Sebastopol. Commander Fanshawe, one of the group that welcomed us at the station, spoke excellent English and I knew that he could look after the Mission and play the part of Virgil in the modern Inferno of rebellious Sebastopol.

Directly from the station I went to the Fleet flagship *Georgii Pobedonosets* where I hunted up a former classmate of mine who was on the staff. He twitted me on my marvelous foresight in routing the American naval delegation to Sebastopol at the worst possible moment, and after some further banter took me over to his room and explained what had happened. It appeared that since the beginning of June a very active agitation against the officers had been developing among the crews. Delegates from the Baltic were berating their Black Sea comrades: "It's like under the old régime here! You're still under the thumb of that fellow Kolchak and his officers. Look what we've done to them in the Baltic. We now have a real seaman's navy, while you here are still playing at being noblemen's underlings." Assertions were made, and believed, that officers were thinking of starting a counter-revolution. These assertions were groundless, since the meetings of the officers' union were held openly and members of the crews were able to be present at them and follow the discussions, which had no political coloring. Nevertheless the propaganda took root; the men began to distrust the officers and gradually extended their suspicions to Admiral Kolchak, in command of the Fleet. At one of the meetings, when some fifteen thousand men were gathered in the courtyard of the Fleet's depot, Kolchak was accused of being a large landowner and devoted therefore to the interests of the landowning class. A further attack was leveled at him: that he had weakened the Fleet by taking ships out of the line. As a matter of fact the old battleship *Tri Sviatitilia* was decommissioned as it had no fighting value, and her crew was used on the ships of the transport flotilla at Odessa to supplement the shortage of men due to leaves being granted *ad lib.* by the Soviet. One of the destroyers, the *Zharkii*, commanded by George Vesselago

(who, by the way, is now a successful Philadelphian), was also ordered by Kolchak to strike its pennant because of the arrant insubordination of the crew, who declared their lack of confidence in their Commanding Officer on the grounds that he was recklessly jeopardizing their lives by exposing the ship to (in their opinion) unnecessary risks while operating against enemy ships or fortifications.

Kolchak went to that meeting and was called a bloated landlord to his face. He asked for the floor and pointed out that he did not possess land or other immovable property and that his movable wealth consisted of several suitcases with their contents which were saved by his wife at the time of the evacuation of Libau in 1914, where all his few possessions were lost when the Germans occupied that port. He said that he did not even own a bank account and that anyone who could prove his having land, property, or capital could claim it from him. This made an impression and the meeting dispersed without taking any action.

That same evening, however, Kolchak received an invitation to come to the meeting of the newly reëlected Soviet. As he entered the premises he heard that the Soviet were discussing the question of the disarming of all officers and, his presence being unnoticed by the presiding body of the Soviet, he left in disgust.

The next day one of the battleships flashed out a radio message in the name of the Soviet to have all officers disarmed and to search officers' houses for weapons. These instructions were immediately carried out by the men without referring them to the Admiral in Command.

Kolchak assembled the crew of his flagship and addressed them in impassioned words about the absurdity of accusing the officers of intensions to start a counter-revolution, and concluded that he considered the order to disarm them as a personal insult, that he did not wish to continue in command any longer and would telegraph the Government accordingly. Then he took his sword—a weapon given him for signal gallantry during the siege of Port Arthur in the Russo-Japanese War—and with a dramatic gesture threw it overboard.

Meanwhile a delegation from the Soviet arrived and presented a resolution calling him to surrender his command. Kolchak replied that he had already done so. His house, however, was searched by order of the Soviet.

Kerenskii, upon receipt of Kolchak's telegram, immediately telegraphed in crisp, cutting language demanding that the Soviet desist

from their outrages, return weapons to officers and cease all further infringements of discipline. He also recalled Kolchak to Petrograd to report on the events to the Government.

And thus matters stood. Kolchak's power over the men was irretrievably shattered, the remnants of the prestige he had enjoyed at the beginning of the Revolution were wiped out, and he himself, as well as the officers, came to realize that their hopes of the Revolution following a different, more orderly, and more peaceful course in the Black Sea Fleet than in other parts of the Russian navy were scattered to the winds.

One may argue that Kolchak acted rather rashly; that instead of indulging in empty gestures such as throwing his sword overboard, he might either have stood on his legal rights and refused to surrender his command, or even have tried to collect a few stalwarts and attempt to restore order by force. I believe that he could not consistently follow the first course as he realized that his power in the Fleet was not due to any governmental commissions but to his own personal prestige, and when that was gone nothing remained but a hollow pretense which it was useless to defend. It was better to discard the symbols of power when the essence was gone than to cling to pretenses of legality which at that time had no real meaning in Russia. The long and short of it was that every seaman at Sebastopol knew that he could with impunity kill any officer, including Kolchak, while an officer attempting to insist even on the most elementary forms of discipline ran the risk of meeting death which would remain unavenged and of causing terrific reprisals on his family and relatives. Under these circumstances any attempt at making a last stand had no sense, would be a quixotic gesture leading merely to the useless slaughter of scores or even hundreds of officers and to an increase of anarchy and violence.

It was clear to me that it would serve no purpose for the American Naval Mission to remain at Sebastopol any longer, and I made tentative arrangements for our car to be attached to the evening express for Petrograd.

At the Naval Officers' Club, a meeting place previously agreed upon, I found Admiral Glennon with the other American naval officers, in company of Commander Fanshawe and the representatives of the Sebastopol Soviet. I asked Bernhard to lunch with me at a small table apart from the main group of the Mission and during the meal told him what I had learned, suggesting that he speak to the Admiral about my recommendation to return to Petrograd by the next train.

After lunch I left him to speak to Admiral Glennon and went to the smoking room to hunt up some of my classmates serving in the Black Sea Fleet whom I had not seen since graduation, as connections between the two navies were few, and there was not much intercourse between its officers.

In the vestibule of the club I ran into a disheveled bluejacket who was talking loudly and with obvious intent to insult a young naval officer. By this time I was pretty well keyed up by what I had heard and seen during the day.

"Will you leave the premises of the club forthwith!" I said to the seaman.

"No, I'll do nothing of the sort. This place belongs to me as much as to you!" was the retort.

"Well, I'll show you it doesn't belong to you yet," I answered, and taking him by the scruff of the neck dragged him out of the club. There the matter ended. The man simply walked away. Some of my Black Sea colleagues reprimanded me for rashness, fearing that there would be repercussions.

After I returned to the dining room, Admiral Glennon told me that he had had a very interesting morning and that the turret drill on board the new battleship *Volia* had impressed him favorably.

"They went at it with a will. Forgot all about the Revolution and behaved like first-rate gun crews."

As I wanted to complete the arrangements for our return trip, I suggested to Admiral Glennon that Commander Fanshawe continue with him for the rest of the day, while I made the necessary arrangements with the station authorities and purchased food for our return journey.

Upon completing my work I looked up my old friend Lieutenant Commander Baron Nicholas Hoiningen Huene. We went for a stroll in one of the public parks, talking over the events of the day and the prospects for the future. From time to time we met bluejackets carrying bundles of officers' swords or dirks tied with a piece of string.

Huene told me he was fed up with service in the navy and intended to resign his post on the Staff and join one of the Shock Battalions of the army as a private. We were in a rather elegiacal mood, as we did not really believe that we should ever meet again and could only hope that we would die with our boots on and not be tortured to death in such fiendish manner as befell many of our closest friends at Hel-singfors and Kronstadt in March.

When I again joined the American naval officers I learned of a

most astonishing event. Admiral Glennon had gone to a large public meeting attended by several thousands of seamen and soldiers. He was asked to address the gathering and delivered himself of a truly inspired piece of oratory, punctuating his speech with highly expressive gestures. He told the men about the great American democracy, about the discipline in the American navy, about the traditions of freedom coupled with self-restraint which alone made democracy possible, called on them to desist from insulting their officers, urged that they return their weapons, and pressed upon them the necessity of accepting the rudimentary forms of discipline without which the Fleet would become worthless. He also spoke of Kolchak in terms of high praise, and pleaded with the men to be loyal to him. Glennon's speech was superbly translated and made a deep impression on the meeting. Probably this was an instance unique in all naval history that a foreign officer made a speech which helped to quell a mutiny. A few hours later Admiral Glennon was told that as a result of his address the Soviet had rescinded all their obnoxious orders excepting that dismissing Kolchak from the post of Admiral in Command.

Admiral Kolchak and his Chief of Staff, Captain M. I. Smirnov, decided to go to Petrograd by the same train to which our car was coupled. As soon as I learned that they were on board, I immediately went to call on them.

Kolchak was very nervous and seething with indignation against the Soviet on the one hand and the Government on the other. He considered that the latter had placed him in an impossible position by disregarding his reports and recommendations and refusing to take any practical steps to help him restore discipline in the fleet. Kolchak saw clearly that Kerenskii would try to make a scapegoat of him on the technical ground of his failure to maintain discipline in the fleet and voluntarily resigning his post. Both Kolchak and Smirnov were very much interested in the American Mission's visit and asked about their impressions of Sebastopol. I suggested that they both call on Admiral Glennon as I was certain he would be glad to see them.

While we were talking, Kolchak caught sight of a disreputable-looking bluejacket who had crept up to the compartment in which we were sitting. Apparently the Admiral took this man for a Bolshevik spy sent to shadow him all the way to Petrograd. This was too much for him after the events of the last few days. He whipped out an automatic he was carrying in his pocket and rushed at the seaman. The latter ran for his life, while Smirnov and I had great difficulty in

calming Kolchak, who kept repeating: "They're even sending spies to watch me on the train."

It was obvious that the strain he had been under since the March days was beginning to tell, and he apparently was not able to control himself. Evenness of temper, of course, was never a prominent characteristic of Kolchak, as all of us who served under him well know. However, I could see a great difference since the days we last met in the Gulf of Riga.

Admiral Glennon and the other American naval officers were most courteous to Admiral Kolchak and his Chief of Staff when they came to call. They expressed regrets that they had been unable to enjoy their visit to Sebastopol while the Admiral was still in command. Soon a very lively conversation developed regarding Kolchak's operations against the Bosphorus, as well as his plans to attack Constantinople from the Black Sea. As far as I could judge, Kolchak made a very favorable impression on Glennon and his staff. McCully of course knew him already.

During that conversation the idea struck me that it would be a good thing for Kolchak to go to America. This plan was at first quite nebulous in my mind and I discussed it vaguely with Commander Crosley. When I mentioned the matter later to Glennon he thought well of it. While we still were on the train these discussions progressed, as Kolchak also seemed to be interested, although he could not commit himself without first learning the outcome of the review by the Government of the events that had led to his resignation.

Some of the ideas behind these discussions were based on a vague expectation that the American navy might undertake an attack on the Dardanelles, as the best possible way of helping the Allies to break the stalemate and help Russia. The capture of the Dardanelles and of the Bosphorus would open the way for supplies of munitions, goods, and perhaps fighting men from America to Russia. It was thought that Kolchak's experience in mining operations, his knowledge of the Turkish fortifications and of their tactics, as well as the plans he had elaborated for a large-scale landing operation against the Bosphorus, would prove helpful to the United States Navy. The suggestion of having the Russian Government send a naval mission to America to return the visit of Admiral Glennon and his colleagues was elaborated from these premises, as well as the plan to name Admiral Kolchak head of that mission.

At the time these suggestions were first broached to the Russian

Government (to A. I. Lebedev, if I remember rightly, who was at that time the political appointee supervising the Ministry of the Navy) the plan was not received very cordially. Admiral Glennon was told that Kolchak was still under the accusation of not having acted energetically enough to restore discipline and suppress the rebellion at Sebastopol and that before anything could be done that matter had to be cleared up.

Admiral Glennon, that honest Irish-American, got quite red in the face and retorted something to the effect that if anyone was to blame for the situation at Sebastopol it was certainly not Kolchak, judging by what the Mission had witnessed on the spot and heard from reliable people there. He then continued to insist on the plan, enlisting Senator Root's support.

Later, as I understand, the head of the Mission himself took up the question directly with Kerenskii. Finally the proposal as promulgated at that time was approved: That the United States Government would welcome a Russian naval mission to America, together with an informal suggestion that Admiral Kolchak would prove very acceptable as its head.

As I did not personally see the official correspondence with regard to this and as my knowledge of the final development is derived from what I had heard from the American naval officers, from Admiral Kolchak, and from the officers of the Russian Naval General Staff, there is room to doubt whether I am right in believing that there never was any question of this being more than a courtesy gesture on the part of the American Government.

Subsequently, when plans for an attack on the Dardanelles were abandoned (if they ever actually existed) the whole trip of the Russian naval mission degenerated into a courtesy visit of Admiral Kolchak and several Russian naval officers, who formed his staff, to the United States, where they were most cordially received and enjoyed the hospitality of the American Government.

In my opinion, Kolchak himself did not clearly understand how the whole matter came about, and left Russia under the impression that the United States Navy wanted him to come over to do some important work in connection with the participation of the American naval forces in the war. A few weeks after our trip from Sebastopol, when I met him in London on his way to America, he told several Russian naval officers in my presence that the American Government wanted him to act as their adviser on mining and several other naval problems. I believe that this confusion came about partly because of

the nervous tension he was under at the time the plan originated, and also because no clear explanation of the situation was given him in Petrograd before he started on his trip to America. My own impression is that the whole thing originated as a good-will gesture on the part of that fine naval officer, Admiral Glennon, to another seafaring man of international repute, Admiral Kolchak, and that the superstructure gradually erected on that foundation was never officially approved by American authorities in the United States, while Kolchak construed the unofficial discussion he had had with the American naval officers in Russia as a definite official plan.

In his testimony before the Extraordinary Investigating Commission at Irkutsk in 1920 a few days before his execution, he said: "A Russian officer, a Lieutenant detailed as aide to Admiral Glennon, called on me and informed me of Admiral Glennon's wish to see me. Knowing the aims of that Mission, I said that he might appoint an hour at which I should call upon him. . . . Glennon told me that the purpose of his Mission was to pay a visit to our fleet; also that the American Government was interested in certain questions concerning our mine and anti-submarine work, and would like to become acquainted with it. In addition, he told me, in complete confidence, that in America there existed a plan for an active operation by the American navy in the Mediterranean against the Turks and against the Dardanelles. Knowing that I had worked on analogous operations, Admiral Glennon told me that it would be desirable for me to give him all information concerning landing operations in the Bosphorus."

Kolchak, who at the time of his questioning by the Extraordinary Commission was anxious not to implicate in his testimony any officers whom he considered to be still within the reach of the Reds, did not mention my name. He behaved in this respect entirely differently from the victims of the recent Soviet trials who, on the contrary, tried to implicate anyone they could possibly drag in.

My own recollection of that interview, which took place in my presence and at which I acted as interpreter, was that Kolchak put more emphasis on the Dardanelles problem than Admiral Glennon's remarks during the conversation would warrant.

The appointment of the Russian Naval Mission to the United States led to the most fantastic rumors among the Russian naval officers, and in Petrograd in general, including the statement from "authoritative sources" that Kolchak was to be appointed to command the American navy! This resulted in an enormous influx of applications from Russian naval officers for service under the Stars and Stripes which del-

used the offices of the American naval attaché at Petrograd. As Mrs. Crosley, the wife of the then naval attaché, says in her interesting *Intimate Letters from Petrograd*, that remarkable piece of news even appeared in the Petrograd daily press, and the American Embassy had to deny officially that Kolchak was going to take charge of Uncle Sam's ships. Nevertheless, this chain of circumstances led to Kolchak's finding himself abroad at the time of the November Revolution and to his making his way to Omsk and ultimately to his Golgotha at Irkutsk. Here are the elements of a fine piece of research work for the "determinists": What economic and social forces led to Kolchak's becoming the Supreme Ruler of the White Russians? Was it perhaps the casual conversation I had with Commander Crosley on the train from Sebastopol?

Any historian studying events in Siberia during the Civil War ought to take into consideration that the last days Kolchak spent at Sebastopol prior to his resignation from the command of the naval forces of the Black Sea deeply affected his views and behavior. There is no doubt in my mind that the impression of those days had a profound influence both on his thought and his actions at Omsk.

Our next trip—to Archangel—was comparatively uneventful. The long slow journey on a railway clogged with ammunition trains did not provide any interesting impressions, with the exception of a stop at Vologda where we had time to go for a walk in the city and sample the handmade lace woven by the peasant women of that province. The lace proved irresistible to the married men (and, if I remember correctly, even to some of the bachelors) in our group. Cable lengths of it were bought and stored away to take home as a souvenir of the trip.

At Archangel we found conditions about as bad as at other sea-ports, with the exception that no immediate apprehension of murder overshadowed the daily lives of the naval officers.

It was particularly interesting to me to visit the patrol ship *Gorislava*—the former *Josephine*—a yacht which I had purchased when I was with the Embassy at Washington from Mr. Joseph Widener of Philadelphia on behalf of the Russian Government.

My friend Commander Luther was in command of that ship. He was quite pessimistic as to the future of the naval forces of the White Sea, but apparently retained a certain measure of authority on board the *Gorislava*, no doubt because of his remarkable personality and excellent seamanship.

When the Mission came aboard and were inspecting the *Gorislava* there were several seamen lounging on deck, playing some game. None of them paid the slightest attention when Admiral Glennon approached them. Luther then turned to them and said calmly but firmly: "Get up, will you! Don't you see that an American Admiral is visiting the ship?"

The men got up reluctantly and stood at attention. Our American guests probably did not realize that Luther had accomplished quite a feat in making them show some respect for the Admiral's braid. On many a ship of the Russian navy at that time men would blandly ignore such orders or even, having ignored them, file a complaint against the Captain of the ship, accusing him of bullying the crew.

Our last long trip took us to the Gulf of Riga, the most active theatre of naval warfare on the Baltic at that time, to Helsingfors, the principal fleet base, and Reval, that great, still uncompleted naval fortress and navy yard.

Through the pine-clad sand dunes of Estonia our car bore us to the advance base of the Gulf of Riga naval forces at Roggekuel. We were taken over tracks laid on the breakwater, and when we woke up in the morning the gray-green water of the Gulf was lapping under the windows of the car.

It was to me a strange sensation to see the familiar gray shapes of destroyers, of patrol ships, of mine-layers in that home port of my old flotilla; to feel that I had ceased to participate in that teeming life of Roggekuel; that I was in a position to observe it as an outsider and myself have no part in its activities. It was a weird feeling of being an exile in the midst of friends and former associates in the struggle against the German naval and air forces. I had no wish to return and share their fate, although I had loved it all deeply and still had difficulty in thinking of myself as not belonging to their group. It was like a premonition of the real exile, not only from the flotilla, but from the navy, and from Russia.

The small "French type" destroyer assigned to carry the Mission to Zerel was moored within a dozen yards of our car. Apparently the Admiral in Command had selected this ship deliberately, as on the bridge I saw one of the best destroyers' captains, Commander Chaplin, who later played a prominent rôle at Archangel during the Intervention.

My apprehensions that the destroyer would be filthy and the crew lax and insubordinate proved unfounded. Chaplin had the situation

well in hand. The men were cleanly dressed, paraded with a will, and went cheerfully to their stations. As the moorings were cast off the destroyer slipped out of the small harbor, maneuvered skilfully among a mass of shipping, and sped into the open sea.

The fresh breeze and the short, choppy sea added to my enjoyment in being on board ship again, and I spent a few hours on the bridge chatting with Chaplin. He seemed to have no illusions as to the immediate future, and thought that the last vestiges of discipline would disappear as soon as the ships returned to their winter bases at the end of the campaign.

We found several new oil-burning destroyers of the *Novik* type anchored at Zerel, where we landed to inspect the twelve-inch fifty-two caliber naval batteries installed there to defend the mine fields barring the entrance to the Gulf of Riga against attempts of the German fleet to break through and support the operations of their army against Riga.

It was a perfect sunny day. We were walking along a narrow dirt road winding among scrubby pine trees toward the batteries, when we heard the sound of aircraft propellers and soon caught sight of an entire squadron of German seaplanes in formation overhead. We stood under some trees so as not to be conspicuous against the pale sand of the road, while the planes winged their way low over our heads and disappeared to bomb the destroyers.

Admiral Glennon felt that the planes' visit was arranged by the Germans as a special courtesy to the American Mission. He enjoyed himself hugely, standing under a small pine tree and admonishing us: "Disband, boys, they're making for us!" This was his first experience of a German air raid.

Captain Knuepfer of the Naval Guards, due to whose energy and remarkable administrative qualities the Zerel batteries were constructed in such an amazingly short time, met us halfway and took us to see the guns and ammunition magazines. He had quite a number of Naval Guardsmen in his command and apparently handled them successfully, as there were no signs of friction or disaffection among his men, who looked well turned out and seemed to be under good discipline.

After we completed our inspection, Knuepfer had his men paraded and, making a short speech of welcome to the American visitors, called for cheers in their honor and signaled to his men to show their good will to Admiral Glennon in Russian fashion by tossing him in the air.

This was done quite gently. Though Glennon was at first somewhat taken aback by this mode of salute, in the end, with his keen appreciation of new experiences, he got a great deal of fun out of it.

Knuepfer's wife, a charming blonde of the Baltic Province type, and their pretty little daughter entertained us at the Commandant's small house tucked away among flowering shrubs, and gave us an excellent luncheon. The atmosphere of their home was so peaceful that it seemed incredible that we were at a place visited almost daily by German planes from the other side of the Zerel Narrows, and that we were among the "pride of the Russian Revolution"—the Baltic Fleet seamen. The illusion of stability, of a placid, humdrum, peaceful life was so complete that we came to with a start while we were returning to the destroyers when we heard the anti-aircraft guns going full blast and saw German air-bombs bursting around us.

These trim gray ships zigzagging on the smooth water of the bay, the white puffs of the pom-poms and the larger bursts of the heavier anti-aircraft guns puncturing the Prussian-blue sky, the tall feathery geysers of water thrown up by the air-bombs' explosions and the small gray flecks of the planes circling around, diving and climbing, were like a complicated game played by grown-up children and staged for the special entertainment of our American visitors.

There were no casualties on board the destroyers and, when the Germans tired of the game, all were accounted for as they returned to their base.

Admiral Glennon obviously very much admired Admiral Razvozov, commanding the Riga naval forces, who later became the Commanding Admiral of the Baltic Fleet. I believe that the sympathy was mutual, as Razvozov detailed one of his best modern destroyers to carry the Mission to Helsingfors by way of the intricate island passage from Hango.

The Captain of the *Samson*, Commander Ivanov, nicknamed "Rufus," knew these passages as a farmer knows his backyard. He provided quite a thrill for the officers of the Mission by keeping up a pace of about thirty knots in these narrow and treacherous waters, where the navigable channels twist and turn in a most unpredictable way. That short run to Helsingfors gave me the keenest pleasure. I knew Ivanov's ability and was delighted to see his destroyer in such good working order.

Admiral Glennon apparently never experienced anything like that breakneck race through the intricate channels around rocky islets without any aids to navigation other than some white paint-spots on

the rocks. All buoys and signs were removed in these passages to make them more difficult for the enemy submarines to navigate.

The American Admiral's hands firmly clasped the rail of the destroyer's bridge and his blue Irish eyes sparkled with enjoyment as the *Samson* twisted in and out among the rocks. To me it was one of the best hours of my life; it was a farewell to my old navy, still in working trim despite the seeds of decay, still able to present a decent front to the enemy.

The trip was over all too soon. As we slipped into the Helsingfors inner roadstead I immediately noticed that something was very much amiss. The submarine flotillas were maneuvering in the roadsteads in a very strange manner between the brigade of modern battleships and the Commanding Admiral's yacht. The turrets of some of the battleships were turned, their guns pointing in all directions and not in alignment as they should be when at anchor.

However, the *Samson's* crew did not seem to pay any attention to the puzzling doings in the roadstead and worked quietly and efficiently as the ship almost soundlessly backed into its berth in the harbor. Admiral Glennon was surprised by the neat way the maneuver was performed, and particularly because of the silence and absence of words of command, as he did not notice that all orders as to moorings were carried over telephones and by a system of electric bells.

Asking Admiral Glennon to have patience with me for a few minutes, I went on board the Commanding Admiral's yacht, the *Krechet*. Admiral Verderevskii, whom I had not seen since Reval days, met me very gruffly: "Why in the devil's name did you bring these Americans here? Don't you see we're right in the midst of a mutiny again? The Battleship Brigade pointed their guns at the *Krechet* when I was preparing to leave for Reval, and the submarines had to take battle stations opposite them to protect the yacht. What do you expect me to do about these foreigners?"

Having explained to Verderevskii that ever since Sebastopol the Mission had had a particular knack of arriving at places at the wrong moment, I suggested that he receive them for a few minutes and that I take them to the Naval Officers' Club for dinner with Ivanov and, perhaps, some of the officers of his staff. Admiral Verderevskii agreed to this and suggested that we had better clear out to Reval as soon as possible, he being very apprehensive of the future course of events at Helsingfors and not wanting to have the American Mission on his hands should real trouble break out.

The interview the Admiral had with the Mission was brief and not very successful. I do not believe that the American naval officers had a real chance to understand and appreciate that exceedingly able and clever man. Admiral Glennon came to the Naval Officers' Club in rather somber mood. We sat at a window table overlooking the roadstead and the ships. I told the members of the Mission about the March events at Helsingfors and the murder of Admiral Nepenin within a stone's throw of the window at which we were sitting.

For quite a few days I had noticed that our guests, in line with the general mood of the Mission to which I have already referred, felt that the Russian naval officers had handled the problem of the Revolution very badly. They did not understand the difficulties of the situation in March, nor the change effected in our attitude to rebellions by the Revolution itself and by the lack of organized authority behind the naval command, which really had no longer any effective power and could operate only by moral suasion, there being no force they could use should the men refuse to obey orders. The American naval officers still thought of the whole thing in terms of a rebellion, a naval mutiny, which should have been suppressed by the officers.

While they were personally all very pleasant and courteous to me I had a feeling that all of them, with the exception perhaps of Lieutenant Bernhard, thought that we, the Russian naval officers, were a lot of weak sisters and that a different course would have resulted in the upholding of naval discipline and the restoration of the officers' authority overthrown by the Revolution.

This attitude made me grind my teeth in fury, as I knew that it was not lack of courage or resolution on the part of Nepenin, Kolchak, Verderevskii or other high officers—with the exception of that grotesque buffoon Maksimov, who saw in the Revolution merely a spring-board for his own personal ambitions. I knew from experience, comparison, and observation that these admirals were not in any way inferior to the senior officers of other navies, and some of them, such as Nepenin, Kolchak, and Verderevskii, were really very remarkable men.

As long as this attitude remained merely implied, it was very difficult for me to say anything about it, as the subject was obviously a very difficult one between officers of different and supposedly friendly navies. However, when Glennon, harpooning a slice of smoked salmon from the plate of hors d'œuvres, remarked, "Well, served him right, that fellow Nepenin. He had no business to give

up without a fight," I could not stand it any longer and went for him, hammer and tongs, saying that I felt sure that the other American officers present did not share his opinion of the late Admiral, who had fallen victim to his sense of duty, whom the entire Russian navy admired and who was one of the finest men that ever lived, and wound up by announcing that under the circumstances I must regretfully abandon my duties as naval attaché to the Mission, since there seemed to be no common ground between us.

Glennon nearly had an apoplectic fit as I left the table and stalked into another room. After a while Commander Crosley came out and said all the American naval officers were very sorry about the incident and that Glennon was ready to apologize if I would accept his apology.

When I think of that incident in retrospect, I feel that no real blame attaches to Admiral Glennon. There was too much talk of that kind in the British and American colonies of Petrograd—that the Russian officers were pretty meek, that they did not know how to organize themselves, that, had Americans or Britishers been in their place, things would have gone differently. Glennon was only more frank about it than the others, and I rather liked him for it.

That skirmish gave me a good opening, and while we were en route to Reval I gave my American friends a brief outline of the rebellions of the Russian navy since 1905 and of their suppression, and explained to them the political predicament in which the officers found themselves after March 1917 when they recognized the Provisional Government and offered their allegiance to it, only to discover that the Government itself would not, nor did it even dare, appoint an investigating committee to look into the Helsingfors massacres or punish the murderers, although the killing of Nepenin and other officers occurred *after* the officers had recognized the Government of the Revolution. The Government was more than willing to claim the allegiance and loyalty of the naval officers, but it was unwilling or impotent to back them up in an emergency, or even to punish their murderers. And the officers of the Republican Union were just as subject to this attitude as their frankly monarchistic colleagues. This was not a matter of the officers' politics, but merely an outgrowth of the symbiosis of the Provisional Government with the Petrograd Soviet, which resulted in the paralysis of the Government in the application of force.

After a few uneventful hours at Reval we were back in our car,

which in the meantime had been shunted back from Roggekuel, and began our return trip to Petrograd.

Lying in my bunk unable to sleep and listening to the rhythm of the car's wheels, I tried to sum up my impressions of these visits to the Baltic Fleet. There was, of course, the viewpoint of the witty and nonchalant Commander Pilkin of the *Novik*. (Pilkin was said to be physically so lazy that if he sat down on his newspaper by mistake, rather than get up he would read it by tearing it off, bit by bit.) His comment on the situation was: "Revolution accomplished at least one good thing for us: we don't have to wear shoulder straps any more, like these blasted army officers." But this was obviously pose. The anxious faces of Verderevskii, Razvozov, and Leskov, their evident lack of assurance that they would be able to ward off the impending attack of the German fleet on the islands of the Gulf of Riga, told a different story. The few still efficient ships here and there merely served to make the contrast with the others more pronounced. The mass of the revolutionary seamen seemed to be more intent on fighting their own officers than keeping off the Germans.

What was to be the outcome? This waiting for the impending doom was for the officers something like the medieval torture of the gradual lowering of a heavy slab over the head of a shackled prisoner. A few months more, and the navy as I knew it would cease to exist, like the French *Marine Royale* which came to an end in the eighteenth century. Would there be another, a different navy? Or would Engels' prophecy be fulfilled, and a workers' militia take the place of organized naval and military forces?

When the American Mission were leaving for Vladivostok on their way back to the United States, there was quite a crowd to see them off at the station. As I was saying good-bye to Admiral Glennon and the other members of the Mission I had no thought that one day I should go to live under the flag they swore to defend. At that time all I felt was that here was a group of people going back to a great country, where the political situation was secure in so far as its basic foundations were concerned, that they would sail in their ships, serve in their regiments, work in their offices, respected and honored, while we here, in Russia, were facing an utterly uncertain future without any great odds even on survival and with little prospect of a pleasant or useful career in our respective services. It was suggestive of a gladiator's farewell to a group of spectators who were leaving the circus before the end of the gory spectacle.

Senator Root reported to the Secretary of State on July 10, en route to the East from Viatka: "We feel we have contributed materially to strengthening the Provisional Government and improving the morale of the people and the army. The situation is certainly much more hopeful and stable than it was when we arrived." In commenting on the objective of the advance of the Russian troops on June 18th-July 1st, the head of the Mission said in his official report that "the purpose was rather to restore the fighting power of the Russian army as a whole. . . . That purpose has been to a great extent accomplished."

And thus history is written. A few short weeks later the Kornilov affair * ended all hopes for the possibility of the Provisional Government weathering the storm. The fighting power of the Russian army was irretrievably lost because of the Austro-German counter-offensive and, within less than four months after the Mission left, the whole structure of Russian democracy collapsed under the blows of the Bolsheviks.

* The futile attempt of the Russian military to stem the rising tide of the proletarian revolution. Kornilov, then Commander-in-Chief of the Russian armies, and Kerenskii, the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, first agreed to act in concert. Later, by mutual distrust and because of intrigues of their entourage, they broke the agreement, Kerenskii declaring Kornilov a traitor and deposing him from the Supreme Command.

A PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

IN JULY I went to England to take over the duties of assistant naval attaché at the Embassy. I was not particularly interested in going there. However, I decided to accept the offer made to me by Captain Eugene Behrens, the newly appointed Assistant Chief of the Naval General Staff, because I knew that I could not be of any use to the navy in Russia and did not want to shirk my duty to the country.

My leaving Petrograd coincided with the first day of the July rebellion of the Bolsheviks. The simple matter of getting my baggage to the railway station turned out to be quite a complicated undertaking. The Staff sent a truck and, to make certain that all my trunks and bags would get to their destination, I went with it myself. We were stopped on our way several times by soldiers of the Grenadier Guards Regiment who were taking part in the rebellion. They wanted to commandeer the truck for their equipment and ammunition, but I managed to persuade them to let me go to the station first and then give up the truck. With several Grenadiers piled into it, their rifles decorated with huge red ribbons, we finally reached the Finland Railway Station. There another difficulty arose. A crowd composed of some anti-Bolshevik elements had gathered in the square before the station. When they saw the truck arriving with the Grenadiers who were well known for their Bolshevik leanings, they set upon me, taking me for one of Lenin's followers. Someone suggested that I was a Bolshevik emissary trying to escape abroad with some important state documents, and it was decided then and there to have my baggage searched. The Grenadiers did not seem to be interested one way or the other—all they wanted was to get complete possession of the truck as soon as possible. So I was left alone to face the ire of the anti-Bolshevik gathering. I realized full well that if I let them open my baggage all my possessions would disappear in the twinkling of an eye and I should have to go abroad empty-handed. So I

harangued the mob, waving my documents over my head and shouting about the important mission on which I was going abroad at the behest of the Provisional Government. The sight of my diplomatic passport had some effect on those who could see it, and ultimately it was agreed that it would be sufficient for me to open one bag only, to be selected by the crowd, to show that I was not concealing any important secret documents in my baggage. This helped me to get by with the loss of a few small articles only.

Having delivered my possessions into the safekeeping of the baggage master, I went home on foot, as the truck was already gone and the tramways were not running.

By the time I reached my parents' apartment I found that there was a call from the Naval General Staff urging me to make an attempt to come to the Admiralty as a very pressing situation had developed there.

Putting on an old overcoat and a cloth cap, I pocketed a large automatic with some spare clips of cartridges and started immediately for the Admiralty. My first attempt to cross the Neva—over the Palace Bridge—was abortive, as the draw had been opened, apparently to prevent the mutineers from crossing. Then I skirted the Neva going downstream towards the Nicholas Bridge. To my relief I found it still passable, but there were groups of soldiers stationed at the entrance, stopping all who wanted to cross. A column of the Finland Guard Regiment was at that moment entering the bridge with flying red banners at its head, and I stepped into its ranks when I noticed that several other civilians were marching with the soldiers. At that time I was unable to determine whether these soldiers were moving against the Government or going to its defense. All I was interested in was to cross the bridge, and as soon as the column reached St. Isaac's I broke away from it and went to the Naval General Staff offices where I found the doors guarded only by a *Suisse*.

Behrens, Romanov, and several other officers were sitting in one of the rooms before a large fireplace, sorting out their most secret files. They had decided, owing to the danger of the Staff being raided by the rebels, to destroy all the files containing the important naval secrets entrusted to our navy by the Allies, in order to obviate the risk of these documents falling into the hands of German spies who might penetrate the offices of the Staff. It was thought that by keeping all connecting doors barricaded there would be time enough to douse the documents with kerosene and burn them before the mutineers could gain access to the room.

So we kept vigil over the secrets placed in the Russian navy's safekeeping by the Allies, sending out from time to time one or another officer to reconnoiter. About two o'clock in the morning it was reported by our scouts that all posts placed by the mutineers in the vicinity of the Admiralty had been withdrawn and that there was no longer any reason to expect an attack on the Admiralty.

Most of us then went home, leaving Behrens with the officers on night duty to stand guard over the documents.

After having a bath, I took a small satchel with the letters Behrens asked me to deliver to Admiral Volkov, our naval attaché in London, and went on foot to the railway station through deserted streets, reaching the train without any difficulty.

Only upon entering Sweden did I learn that the rebellion was suppressed and that the Provisional Government was still in the saddle.

During the months spent in London I was quite well informed of the changes in the situation in Russia, as Behrens kept the naval attachés exceedingly well posted by cable on what was going on. Even in the days of the Provisional Government's dying agony, his communications were most remarkable for their clarity and realism.

After the seizing of power by the Bolsheviks, in November 1917, the Russian Embassy in London, like most other Russian diplomatic agencies abroad, continued to exist, having declined to recognize the Bolshevik Government. Its personnel was still carried on the diplomatic list. Since there were several Russian naval vessels in British ports, including the old cruiser *Variag* and two destroyers, it became urgent for the naval attaché to adopt a definite policy with respect to further coöperation with the naval institutions in Russia, since the war was not yet over as far as Russia was concerned. Although an armistice had been declared on the Russian front, there was still a somewhat remote possibility of Russia's continuing in the war.

Under these circumstances it was very important, not only for the naval attachés, but for the Russian embassies in the Allied countries, as well as for those responsible for the Russian troops at the French and Salonika fronts, to obtain first-hand information on the new government, to size it up and to shape their course accordingly. It must be remembered that at that time the vast majority of Russians in official positions abroad regarded the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks as a passing incident in the constantly changing situation at

home. So there was also the problem of determining how long this new government was likely to last.

To me personally there was another question. The position of the military attaché, the naval attaché, the naval and the military missions, and the special representatives of the Russian navy and army attached to British armed forces was rapidly becoming anomalous. They were, so to speak, suspended in mid-air, and their ordinary duties had ceased. True, communications were still being passed to us by the Naval General Staff from the personnel inherited by the Soviets from the Provisional Government, who were at that time performing their duties under the supervision of the komissars appointed by the Bolsheviks. It was clear, however, that such a lopsided connection could not long continue, unless the naval and military attachés declared themselves as recognizing and accepting the change of government in Russia.

To sit in London and continue to draw a fairly large salary without doing anything useful either for my own country or for the Allied cause was most repugnant to me. I had to choose between entering the naval or military service of one of the Allied nations, returning to Russia, or looking for a business connection and building up a new set of interests entirely outside of the government service, thus abandoning the profession of the sea for which I was trained and which I loved.

Upon consulting my chief, Rear Admiral Volkov, as well as Captain Dmitriev, the Russian naval attaché in France, I decided to make a trip to Petrograd to see Captain Behrens, who was at that time acting as Chief of the Naval General Staff, in order to try to ascertain what were the prospects for the continuation in power of the Bolsheviks, also what were the trends of policy of the new government, its basic ideas and plans, particularly with respect to the war; then to return to London and give to the various Russian naval attachés abroad the summary of the impressions obtained on that trip so that they would be in a position to shape their course of action with a better knowledge of the facts. Incidentally, I thought that the trip would also help me make a decision as to my own future.

In line with this decision a cable was dispatched to Petrograd, outlining the scope of my trip and asking for a guarantee of admission to Russia, safe conduct while there, and a guarantee of an exit visa when I considered my mission fulfilled.

An answer jointly signed by Behrens and Fedor Raskolnikov, the

Komissar of the Naval General Staff, promptly arrived, granting all these requests and inviting me to make the trip.

The next day I departed for Petrograd via Bergen-Christiania-Stockholm. On the Norwegian steamer to Bergen, there were among the passengers Mr. Chicherin, who became later the Soviet Komissar for Foreign Affairs, and two or three minor Bolshevik sympathizers returning to Russia from England. There were also on board Lieutenant Colonel Breckinridge, of the U. S. Marine Corps, who was with the American Legation at Christiania and whom I had known slightly at Petrograd. There was also a very unpleasant person, a French consular officer, formerly stationed in one of the southern cities of Russia.

While on board I kept aloof from Chicherin as I did not want to appear to seek his favor, although he interested me very much as a personality. He looked far from well and his patrician face, above a bright-colored scarf untidily wrapped around his neck, looked prematurely aged. He reminded one of an elderly bird. His satellites were unimportant and I paid no attention to them.

My decision not to speak to Chicherin was based on my general conception of the plan of my trip: I was going at the invitation of the navy and with a guarantee from the Soviet authorities. However, I did not recognize the Soviet Government and had no intention of having any dealings with them outside the cycle of activities necessary for me to accomplish what I had set out to do.

During the trip my closest association was with Breckinridge, for whom I had both respect and liking. At first I spoke to the Frenchman also, but soon discovered that he was rather a despicable fellow, a born bully and an enemy not only of the Bolshevik régime, as he openly professed himself to be, but of Russia itself. He took upon himself to make life miserable for Chicherin and his companions, and singled out for his persecutions the wife of one of Chicherin's followers, a meek little woman whom he succeeded in bringing to tears, to the great indignation of the other passengers.

After a brief stop at Christiania, where I lunched with the Russian naval attaché, Lieutenant Commander von Weimarn, and discussed my plans in detail, I reached Stockholm where I was met at the station by Captain Stashevskii, our naval attaché there. Having discussed my trip with him, I decided to leave my diplomatic passport as well as part of my baggage at his office. Instead of a passport I took with me a certificate signed by Stashevskii to the effect that I

was proceeding to Petrograd at the invitation of the Naval General Staff and its Komissar. This certificate was not sealed, as we both thought that it would be foolish to stamp with the Imperial seal a document intended for use in Soviet Russia.

One of Stashevskii's assistants, a young naval engineer, was apparently quite in favor of the Soviet régime, and told me that he thought I also would like it, as at last we had a government that knew what it wanted and was not afraid to issue orders and insist on their fulfillment.

At that time Mr. Vorovskii was already acting for the Soviets at Stockholm in a semi-official capacity. I did not call on him, however, carrying out the same principle which prompted me not to speak to Mr. Chicherin on board the Bergen steamer. Although this attitude engendered certain difficulties while I was in Russia, it clarified my position, and I preferred it that way. The certificate issued by Stashevskii was also not submitted to Vorovskii for his visa.

It was a bright frosty morning when I reached the Russian border at Haparanda. There were only a few passengers going into Russia that day. We trudged over the hard-trodden snow to the guardhouse on the border. There was no sentry, and we found the guardhouse occupied by a peasant woman who told us that her husband was supposed to look after the post but had gone to Torneo to fetch some supplies and to see the komissar in charge.

"There is no one here to admit you, citizens. You will have to wait until my husband returns."

So we congregated around the large stove and passed the time away talking to the woman about conditions on the Russian side of the border.

"The present commandant is a temporary second lieutenant. He was before with the infantry detachment stationed here. There is also a komissar, a soldier appointed by the Soviets. Besides, there is a local Soviet. Between them they look after things here."

About eleven o'clock came the soldier carrying on a small hand sleigh a sack with bread and other provisions for himself and his family. He greeted us casually and having warmed himself at the stove, proceeded to examine our documents. As he reached mine, he looked puzzled and asked: "And where is the seal on your paper, please?"

"What is the sense of attaching a Tsarist seal to a document today? And, as you know, so far there are no other Russian seals."

"Well, a seal is a seal. A document without a seal is not worth much."

I then produced the original cablegram of the Naval General Staff, signed by Behrens and Raskolnikov. That, however, had no effect whatsoever on the soldier.

"I don't know anything about that telegram nor the people who signed it. I'm only interested in passports and you do not seem to have the right kind of document. It looks as though I oughtn't to let you in."

After a great deal of coaxing and arguing I said: "Look here, Father, you are taking a great deal upon yourself. I have arrived at the express invitation of the Smolnyi * crowd. Lenin knows all about it. You'd better take me to the commandant and let me talk to him. You have no right to refuse me admission and I am not going to take 'no' for an answer. Come on, let's go to the commandant's office. And make it snappy! I am tired of waiting here the whole morning just because you happen to be late in drawing your ration."

After more argument and growling, the soldier took his rifle and went with me to the commandant. There the whole performance was repeated on a slightly more intelligent plane.

"Citizen, your documents do not seem to be in order. I cannot let you proceed to Petrograd. Without a seal a certificate is not complete."

Fairly exasperated by then, I made the suggestion that they send a telegram to the Naval General Staff at my expense and that they let me wait in the meanwhile at the Torneo railway station. Later the komissar came in and joined in the discussion. The name of Raskolnikov was apparently not unknown to him and he asked me then: "Who are you actually?"

"I am the Russian assistant naval agent at London."

"What is that—something like the agent of the Volunteer Fleet or the Russian Steamship and Trading Company representative?"

"No, I represent the entire Russian navy in Great Britain. Lenin wanted me to come to Russia to make a report to the Naval General Staff."

"Under these circumstances, as we are still not convinced as to your identity, we shall have to send you to Petrograd under escort as a prisoner and to deliver you at the Smolnyi for whatever disposition the Government may wish to make of you."

* Headquarters of Bolshevik leaders.

"Suits me perfectly and will save me the railway fare and the cost of food from Torneo to Petrograd."

The komissar at first thought I was bluffing, but realizing that I had made up my mind to go to Petrograd even should I have to proceed as a prisoner, he relented and said: "Please go to the railway station now and have some lunch there. The train for Petrograd won't leave till the afternoon. By that time I shall have an escort ready to accompany you to the Smolnyi."

This whole incident, though irritating, had amused me a great deal and given me an insight into the practical working of the Soviet administrative machine in out-of-the-way places. I was not really worried, for at that time I regarded Raskolnikov's guarantee as a perfectly good safeguard and the prospect of going to the Smolnyi did not disturb me at all.

While I was lunching at the station, a sergeant of the local infantry detachment came in and asked if I was the man who was supposed to go to Petrograd under escort. I answered in the affirmative and asked the man to join me in a bottle of beer. He accepted and sat down at my table. After a couple of beers and some sandwiches he became quite talkative and discussed the situation at Torneo as well as his ideas about the change of government.

"That fellow Kerenskii was a tool in the hands of the British and French imperialists. Just a puppet that waved its arms and made speeches when some foreign ambassador pulled the strings. Lenin will stop this war and give land to us peasants. And that is something to look forward to."

He left me then and returned an hour or so later with a government transportation requisition form.

"We thought you might as well travel first class. Here is an order signed by the commandant. On thinking the matter over we have decided to let you go to Petrograd without an escort. You seem to be all right."

Thanking him for the transportation requisition, I expressed my regrets that I should have to travel alone and that we should have no chance to continue our interesting discussion of the political situation. We then shook hands and I took my bags over to the first-class carriage where I found an entire compartment reserved for my use.

At the Russo-Finnish border, at Beloostrov, some custom-house and passport officials were still functioning. They were obviously left-overs from the old régime, but the insignia were removed from their caps and coats. When they examined my documents I ran again

into the same difficulty I had gone through the day before at Torneo.

"Why did Torneo let you pass? Your document has no seal. We cannot permit you to enter Russia."

By that time I had the right lines: "Well, then, have me arrested and send me to Smolnyi under escort and see what Lenin will do to you," and waved the Behrens-Raskolnikov cablegram in their faces.

After several consultations among the perplexed officials and some further questioning, I was permitted to proceed to Petrograd.

When I reached the Finland Railway Station at Petrograd, I slipped out through a side wicket and hired a sleigh to carry my bags to my parents' house.

The streets were in a disgraceful state and had not been cleared for weeks. A thick, dirty blanket of snow, covering even the sidewalks, had formed into deep ruts and hummocks, which made travel by sleigh a nightmare. As the horse was starved and weak, I got out and walked alongside the sleigh, talking to the driver.

As I was leaving the station I had noticed that the square before it was filled with armed men, with machine-gun cartridge belts slung crosswise over their shoulders in the new revolutionary fashion. There were mounted patrols riding along the streets and from time to time a truck trundled by, carrying a load of armed soldiers and a couple of machine guns mounted in front.

The driver explained to me that this excitement in the streets was because of the disbanding of the Constituent Assembly by the Bolsheviks. In other words, I had managed to reach Petrograd on the momentous day when Lenin had shown to the world that he had turned aside from democratic methods of government and decided to remain in power, regardless of the express will of the people who through universal suffrage had elected a majority of representatives to the Assembly opposed to Lenin's policies.

As I knew very little of the Bolshevik plans at that time and was still under the impression of their summer slogans advocating an early convocation of the Constituent Assembly, I was amazed by the turn things had taken. It seemed to me self-evident that any government attempting to disband the Constituent Assembly by force would provoke armed rebellions throughout the entire country, and that its existence would be placed in jeopardy. The comparative peacefulness of Petrograd—all the armed men in the streets seemed to be on the Government side—and the seeming apathy of the people surprised me considerably.

When I reached my parents' home I found that the apartment was

ice cold. The housekeeper, who was still with the family, explained that there was a great shortage of fuel in the city and that even the kitchen range was not used any more and that food was cooked on a small sheet-iron stove of the type which later achieved a world-wide fame under the name of *Burzhuika*. She brought me some boiled black gruel and told me that Father was still working at the Admiralty and would not be home until late in the evening.

The telephone system was still functioning and I succeeded in getting in touch with Behrens. The latter told me that Romanov had just been liberated from the Peter and Paul Fortress where he had spent some time after the Bolshevik seizure of power. He suggested that I come to his apartment and talk things over before making an appearance at the Admiralty.

Leaving a note for Father, I went on foot—the tramways were not running and I could not find a sleigh for hire anywhere—to Behrens' apartment, picking up on my way a couple of bottles of old Madeira from the cellar of a friend who invited me to help myself.

Both Behrens and Romanov, who roomed together, greeted me in a very friendly fashion and gave me a brief outline of the governmental policy, with particular reference to their views as to the navy. I noticed quite a difference in their viewpoint. Behrens was more inclined to take things for granted, to accept the fact of the Bolshevik rule and merely to look for ways and means to preserve the personnel, particularly the officers, from the rigors of the new régime, and the ships from capture and destruction by the enemy. Romanov, on the other hand, was very resentful of the usurpation of power by Lenin and his followers, and did not beat about the bush in expressing his indignation and his hope that it would not be long-lived.

With regard to the navy, as far as I could see, the Bolsheviks had merely appointed komissars to supervise the activities of the various departments of the Ministry, and had sent out emissaries to exercise control over the fleets in the various seas, without making many changes in the personnel with the exception of some senior officials.

Behrens had had several opportunities to speak both to Lenin and Trotskii and had discussed with the former, jointly with Admiral Altvater, the general principles of the reorganization of the naval forces under the Soviet régime.

"What amazed me," said Behrens, "was that when I proposed certain basic principles for the organization of service and discipline on board ships and in the land forces of the navy, Lenin turned to me and said: 'Why, all this is much too loose-jointed. We want real disci-

pline and you will revise all your propositions accordingly. We are building now. The destruction period is over!"

A small point brought up by Behrens at the time amused me a great deal. During the course of one of his conversations Lenin asked Behrens whether the latter had had an admiral's rank under the old régime. When the latter replied in the negative, remarking laughingly that perhaps that did not matter so much since the advent of the Bolsheviks to power, Lenin shook his head and said: "Well, you are wrong. It is a pity you were not an admiral in the old navy."

As to Raskolnikov, Behrens said that he was a decent fellow who did his best and was trying to supplement his lack of knowledge in naval matters by a great deal of reading and discussion with specialists, but that he lacked experience and did not have any particular ability in administrative matters, being more of the intellectual than the executive type.

The next morning I was introduced to Raskolnikov and had a long rambling talk with him about the war, the Russian naval vessels abroad, and the position the naval attachés were taking with respect to working with the Soviet Government. I liked Raskolnikov personally; he impressed me as a frank, intellectually honest man. As far as I could judge, the other part of Behrens' diagnosis seemed also to hold: Raskolnikov did not impress me as an administrator. He had picked up a smattering of naval information at the Special Course for Midshipmen he had attended, but had no real knowledge that might enable him to form an independent opinion on any important point of naval policy. He was a staunch party member and apparently stood well with the Government although he did not belong to the inner circle of Lenin advisers. There was at the time a shortage of educated Bolsheviks who were familiar with naval matters, and Raskolnikov apparently owed his appointment to that fact.

From that conversation and the subsequent talks I had with Raskolnikov, I reached the conclusion that there were at the time two groups in the councils of the Bolshevik Party: one expected Germany and her satellites to win, while the other, to which Chicherin belonged, thought that the Allies would vanquish their foes.

The penetration of the various government offices by the Bolsheviks at that time was still very incomplete. The majority of the civil servants at Petrograd were out on a political strike against the Government. Even at the Ministry of the Navy where, because of the numerous bluejackets in the various offices, one would expect a firmer hold on the situation, there seemed to be branches of the service whose

location was unknown to the Bolshevik komissars and which, to my knowledge, they had never visited. To these belonged the Central Naval Intelligence Division and the Counter Espionage Bureau.

One of the most memorable episodes of my visit to Petrograd was the discussion I had with Rear Admiral Altvater, who was at the time the naval representative on the Russian delegation at the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations and was already enjoying influence with Lenin and Trotskii.

He came to the Naval General Staff one day when I was in Behrens' office and made a report about the progress of negotiations in the presence of Behrens, Raskolnikov, and myself.

After he finished his report and Raskolnikov had left, Altvater turned to me and said: "Watch what you're doing. The *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of history, is with the Bolsheviks. They alone will be able to rebuild the shattered Russian State. For the rest of your life you're going to regret your failure to understand the trend of historic events and your decision to cast your lot with the Allies against the Bolsheviks."

That diatribe rather surprised me. I assured Altvater that he was addressing his remarks to the wrong person, as my presence at Petrograd was not in the capacity of the spearhead of the Allies or of the anti-Bolshevik forces in general. My mission was a much more modest one: to learn about the policy of the Soviets as to naval affairs in order to communicate it to the naval attachés whom I represented and, incidentally, to make up my own mind whether Lenin and his group held views which I could possibly subscribe to as conducive to a great Russian State.

From that conversation and some casual remarks addressed to me by other people—Bolsheviks as well as their antagonists—I could see that there were rumors afloat in Petrograd greatly exaggerating the importance of my mission.

Altvater continued to taunt me, concluding: "Lenin and the Bolsheviks will win out over all their enemies, domestic or foreign. Attempts to upset their régime will end in naught, as they are the only people in Russia who know what they want and are not inhibited in their endeavors toward that end."

To this I merely replied that I had never thought it necessary to try to play always on the winning team, particularly if I disliked both the captain and the coach.

On my way home from the Admiralty, on the Tuchkov Bridge, I ran into a classmate of mine, Lieutenant Commander Alexander

Sobolev, who at the time was quite a revolutionary enthusiast and had just returned from a trip to eastern Russia with a detachment of seamen in an armored train.

Sobolev greeted me in a very friendly fashion, since, in spite of differences in our tastes and politics, we had always been on good terms at the Naval College.

"Dimitrii, you're the very man I wanted to see: there is a detachment of Baltic Fleet bluejackets with a brigade of armored trains getting ready to move against Dutov and his Cossacks near Orenburg. Several of your pupils are among the petty officers of that brigade and they all spoke very highly of you and of your knowledge of land warfare. They would be glad to have you command them, and we'll go and blow Dutov's forces to hell!"

"Why, Sashka, I never knew you were so bloodthirsty. I hear that Dutov's troops are mostly high-school and university boys with a few military cadets thrown in. Are you really so anxious to kill these youngsters? And why? Come on in, we're very near home. Let's have a glass of Madeira while you tell me more of your bloodcurdling stories."

Sobolev was always a strange fellow, quite different from the conventional Russian naval officer type. He had a prodigious memory, knew Jane's *Fighting Ships* by heart, and could tell you at the drop of the hat the cruising radius of some obsolete Portuguese gunboat. He was frightfully ambitious, and his promotion to a lieutenant commandership in the spring of 1917 "For meritorious service" with some other officers who were largely of the class politically acceptable to the régime, had gone to his head.

Sobolev continued to press me, as we sipped Madeira in my father's living room, to go with the naval armored trains. As a final argument he exclaimed: "And don't you forget that marshals are always made on the side that *supports* the revolution. They get the batons."

To tease Sobolev, I remarked: "Well, Sashka, as far as I remember, leaving Marmont and Davout aside, most of these marshals were socially rather unpleasant people. I don't know whether I really should care to associate with that kind of group."

This opened the floodgates upon me. Sobolev accused me indignantly of snobbishness, of small-mindedness, of the lack of real imagination, of merely playing at being interested in naval and military art, without any real devotion to the profession of arms, and so forth and so on.

Gradually he calmed down, and I drank a mock toast to his future

victories over babes in arms and his rivaling Herod in prowess, saying that as far as I was concerned I was entirely lacking in personal ambition along these lines and preferred to take no part in the bloody mess.

As fate willed it, Sobolev himself did not achieve any notable career during the Civil War. I believe he wound up as the head of the Division of Operations of one of the less important flotillas. After the Civil War he was appointed by the Soviet Government as naval attaché at the Stockholm Legation, then broke with the Soviets for reasons I never could clearly understand, and became an émigré. So, by traveling in opposite directions, we have come to share the common fate of exile after all.

While in Petrograd I went to call on the Dowager Queen Olga of Greece, whose daughter, the Grand Duchess George, had asked me when I left London to look up her mother.

The Queen of the Hellenes was living in a small house belonging to one of her Russian relatives, situated in the "Islands" in the delta of the Neva. I had difficulty in finding the house, losing my way in the dark streets covered with deep snow.

When I rang the bell an elderly servant opened the door and asked my business. I told her that I was a naval officer who wanted to see the Queen because of certain messages I had for her from her relatives abroad. As I was dressed in a rough shooting coat and there was nothing in my attire to indicate a naval officer, the servant was at first very doubtful about admitting me. Then I handed her a letter addressed to the Queen from the Grand Duchess George, and she let me in.

The Queen came into the living room almost immediately, gave me her hand to kiss and commanded me to be seated. She told me she was living in that house with only a couple of old servants and hoped to be permitted to go later to Europe; but that for the time being she did not want to leave, as she was worried over the fate of the Imperial Family and was anxious to keep in touch with them.

Apparently the greatest blow to her was the behavior of the Russian bluejackets. Her father, the Grand Duke Constantine, was the Admiral General of the Russian navy in the days of Emperor Alexander II. He was a liberal-minded man who did a great deal to humanize the service and to establish naval education on a higher plane. The Queen, his daughter, had maintained a keen interest in the navy. Russian ships, calling at Pyraeus, were always the object of her solicitude. She visited Russian seamen at the Athens hospitals, gave them presents, and christened innumerable babies of naval families, so that her god-children ran into the hundreds. She was first the honorary chief of

one of the naval divisions, and later of the cruiser *Admiral Makarov*, whose crew she showered with attentions.

"Can you imagine, some of these fellows from the *Makarov* came to search my apartments some time ago? And didn't I give them a piece of my mind!"

Queen Olga did not seem to have any apprehension as to her personal safety.

"I am a very old woman, my dear. Who would harm me?"

Then she inquired about my father, whom she remembered as an officer of the naval division of which she had been the Honorary Chief. She asked me to tell him that she still remembered him as a young officer aboard the *Kreiser*.

Giving me messages for her children in England, the Queen thanked me for coming to see her, and I rose to take my leave. She rang the bell, but there was no one to answer.

"Oh, they have probably gone somewhere to get food for tomorrow," said the Queen, took one of the candlesticks from the table and went with me into the hall. The electricity was switched off in that part of the city and the house was dark, except for the light of a few candles.

When I expressed concern about her safety, absolutely alone in this rather isolated district, the Queen remarked casually: "Oh, you are quite mistaken. Nobody pays any attention to me here. Since the last search, they know that I have no jewels with me."

When I began to put on my overcoat, the Queen made a gesture to help me.

That was the last straw! I dropped on one knee before that great old lady and kissed her hand.

"Your Majesty, there is no Bolshevik revolution in Greece as yet. You are still a Queen. I feel guilty that I did not oppose your coming out into the hall with me. I yielded to your friendliness and kindness. But how can I keep you standing here while I put on my coat?"

"My boy, someone has to lock the door when you go, and as I am the only person in the house, I must see you right off the premises," laughed the Queen; then, in more serious mood, she made the sign of the cross over my head and kissed me on the forehead.

"Be careful! And don't take any unnecessary chances. And may God protect you."

When I met her later in Paris and reminded her of the incident, she was quite amused to recall it: "The bluejackets were not so bad really. They were ashamed of themselves when they were searching

my house. They are just a lot of overgrown children, and children are bound to be naughty sometimes."

There were several devoted souls at Petrograd who were trying to help the Emperor and his family at Tobolsk. I saw some of them before they left Petrograd on their way to Siberia. A few of them were people with great historic names, but hardly any belonged to the influential palace group that had stood around the throne before the Revolution. Apparently most of the latter preferred to look after their own interests rather than those of the sovereigns who had been so gracious to them while in power.

All kinds of rather vague plans were afoot for the rescue of the Emperor and his family. Among them was the suggestion that a British ship should come to the mouth of the Ob River in Siberia and send her motor launch up the Ob and the Irtysh to take the Imperial Family aboard at Tobolsk or at some point further downstream, with the understanding that arrangements would be made with the guards not to hamper their escape. As far as I know, these were only vague dreams that were never developed beyond the crudest outline. The Cheka made short shrift of most of these devoted people, and nothing came of their endeavors.

At the very end of my stay in Petrograd I ran into several naval officers who had just returned from the Don Cossack region. They were none too optimistic about the chances of establishing there the nucleus of an anti-Bolshevik movement, as they realized that the lukewarmness of the younger Cossacks returning from the front, the animosity between the Cossacks and the peasantry of South Russia, and the open hostility of the industrial workers of the Don Basin, were powerful factors militating against it. However, they felt that a stand should be made somewhere, otherwise they would all perish individually without even the exhilaration of dying in a fight, and the Cossack lands seemed to be better adapted than almost any other part of Russia to serve as the cradle of an anti-Bolshevik revolt.

During my entire visit to Petrograd I did not see anything that I could regard as the nucleus of a serious anti-Bolshevik movement. There was a great deal of talk among the intellectuals, and indignation meetings were held by the liberals and the more moderate socialists, but all I saw and heard in that direction left me under the impression that nothing would come of it, as there was no strong leadership and very little determination to get out in the streets and fight, if necessary. Everybody hoped that someone else would do the job. Among the Baltic Province officers of the Guards I noticed traces

of German Intelligence work in connection with the organization west of Pskov of an anti-Bolshevik military group, encouraged, or at least tolerated, by the German High Command. That enterprise seemed quite insincere to me—merely an instrument of German propaganda among the upper classes in Russia, and perhaps a scarecrow to frighten the Bolsheviks, should they become recalcitrant in carrying out the wishes of the German General Staff with regard to terms of peace. The only really active movement I could see was that among young army and navy officers, military cadets and university students, which was gradually orienting itself toward the Don Cossack territory.

The strength of that movement was very difficult to ascertain. My own impression was that most of the officers were quite willing to let politics alone and go into civil life to try to work out their destinies on a new basis. The main reasons for its inception were, I believe, the disorderly way in which the demobilization of the army was handled, the persecutions of the officers, the lack of any arrangements on the part of the Soviet Government to pension the officers off, and particularly the general feeling that they were considered as inferior and undesirable beings and even as enemies, and would be gradually tracked down, imprisoned, or killed, as witness the terrible examples of the Sebastopol massacres and the death of General Dukhonin.

The Russian capitalists did very little to finance or to organize this movement, as is evident from General Denikin's memoirs and those of other leaders of the White Movement such as General Wrangel. On the other hand these youngsters, who later bore the brunt of fighting against Trotskii's legions, were mostly poorly endowed with material goods and were not particularly anxious to help the capitalists. What they were after was their idea of a regenerated Russia, as a great united state, where there would be a place for them to work and to live. They did not regard Lenin and Trotskii as legitimate rulers of Russia. They viewed them at the time as tools of the German General Staff. The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly provided them with evidence that the Bolsheviks did not have the majority of the Russian people with them and that they were usurpers. The political ideas of these young people were very different; among them were monarchists and liberal republicans, as well as moderate socialists. What united them was the desire to overthrow a government which they did not consider representative of the nation, which was subservient to Germany, and was working against the best interests and the historic national ideals of the country.

In surveying the situation as carefully as possible, I reached the conclusion that these anti-Bolshevik groups were too weak and lacking in cohesion to achieve their ends. The fact that the Bolsheviks had an organized military force at their disposal in the guise of the Lettish Brigades, the bluejackets, armed groups of German and Austrian prisoners and, in the large industrial cities, armed detachments of pro-Bolshevik workers, led me to believe that they would be able to maintain themselves in power.

Meanwhile the time had come for me to return to London and make my report to the naval attachés. I so informed Behrens and Raskolnikov. They asked me whether I would prefer to receive a diplomatic passport, to which I replied that it was immaterial, as long as I was able to leave at an early date.

Then quite suddenly an unforeseen obstacle developed. Raskolnikov called me up and asked me to come and see him at the Admiralty. When I came to his office he was looking quite crestfallen and said: "I am very sorry, but we are unable to give you a foreign passport."

Naturally enough, I was rather indignant and pointed out to Raskolnikov that he had guaranteed me a safe conduct and had promised that I should be able to return to London.

Raskolnikov replied that he realized all that, but that Chicherin had put his foot down and said that I was a dangerous counter-revolutionary and should not be permitted to leave Russia. Raskolnikov further informed me that there was no intention to have me arrested and that I could go wherever I pleased as long as I remained in Russia.

Realizing the futility of further argument, and seeing that Raskolnikov himself was quite ashamed of the turn things had taken, I said: "Very well, I shall go to Moscow this week and look for employment in one of the industrial enterprises there, as I want nothing further to do with the navy."

Later I learned from Behrens that my case was discussed at a meeting of the Soviet of Komissars and that Chicherin had said that we had traveled together in the same ship to Bergen, and that I had not called on him but had spent all my time in company with some of the most reactionary people on board. The latter point rather amused me, as I was mostly with Breckinridge, who did not take sides as far as Russian politics were concerned.

Since I had no intention of remaining in Russia under the vigilant eye of the Bolsheviks I decided to leave immediately, regardless of the fact that the Soviet of Komissars had decided not to let me have

a foreign passport. Realizing as I did that the administration was in a chaotic state, I thought first of the possibility of obtaining a regular foreign passport through the usual channels, i. e., at the office of the Petrograd City Police Commandant, in the hope that Chicherin would forget to notify that office that I was to be refused a passport.

It turned out that first of all I had to secure a discharge from the navy, secondly, to obtain some kind of medical certificate to the effect that my health required treatment at one of the Western European health resorts, and lastly, a certificate from the house committee of the building where I lived.

All these documents I obtained in the record time of two days, and I was then ready to file my application at the Commandant's office.

So far everything was going smoothly and I was congratulating myself on the ease with which I had circumvented the authorities and obtained a regular passport in my own name, contrary to Chicherin's wishes.

However, when I went to the Finland station to take the train for Helsingfors I was still somewhat apprehensive and expected some last-minute trouble. As it turned out, the inspection of documents was quite perfunctory and I reached Finland without any difficulty. Then I had to obtain a permit at Helsingfors to leave Finland. This was also quite easily arranged and everything was ready for the crossing of the border at Torneo. However, just about that time the line was cut by the Finnish White Guards, who had in the meantime rebelled under the leadership of General von Mannerheim.

The days I had spent at Helsingfors had afforded me a few glimpses of the Finnish civil war. I had seen street fighting on a small scale and witnessed the siege of one of the apartment houses on the Esplanade, the main street of the capital of Finland, by a detachment of Red Guards who were firing volleys into the windows. I heard later that the improvised fort was held only by one man, a determined elderly gentleman of Swedish-Finnish antecedents and a former officer of the Finnish army. It was said that this man killed some eight or nine Red Guards and shot himself with his last cartridge.

Knowing that the Grand Duke George was in Helsingfors, I went to call on him at the Nya Societetshuset, the best hostelry of the city at the time.

The Grand Duke received me in the presence of General von Etter, who shortly left us alone. After acknowledging messages from his family in London, he discussed with me his plans for the future. In reply to my suggestion that he immediately leave Finland and go with

me to Sweden as his life was in serious danger, he got up, walked a couple of times across the room and, stopping opposite me, said: "Do you really suppose a Russian Grand Duke would run away from his country like a fugitive from justice?"

This viewpoint rather startled me, but I countered it by saying that as long as there was no legally recognized government in Russia, and the Bolsheviks were undoubtedly usurpers, there was no dishonor in his leaving the country without asking their permission to do so.

"Apart from that," he continued, "I am afraid that should I go abroad, my relatives in Petrograd and elsewhere would suffer in consequence."

I remarked that in my opinion their fate was already sealed and that he was powerless to save them.

"That may be so, but I should hate to think that any action of mine might still further aggravate their dangerous position."

Then I took my leave, promising to convey his wishes to his family in England. A few days later he was arrested and taken to a Petrograd prison.

Despite information as to the progress of the White Finnish rebellion, I made an attempt to leave the country via Tammerfors. But no trains were running north of that industrial center of Finland. Several members of the personnel of the Allied Embassies were also attempting to get through, and among the faces in the windows of the cars I noticed those of rich Petrograd bankers and stock exchange speculators who were also trying to leave the country.

The situation did not seem to look very promising for the Red Finns, although they were helped by the Russian Bolsheviks and had some Russian officers acting as instructors and staff officers. I went over to Björneborg in the hope of obtaining a berth on board a steamer sent there by the Swedish Government to carry Swedish and other Scandinavian refugees from Russia and Finland. I succeeded in getting a cablegram through to Stashevskii and received his cabled assurances that a berth would be reserved for me in that steamer.

Then began the endless waiting at a small local hotel in company with several Russians whom I came to know. The tedium was interrupted by the arrival of Commander and Mrs. Crosley. He had been appointed to Madrid in a post similar to the one he had occupied in Petrograd and was attempting to get through the lines to Spain. They greeted me in some surprise at the station of Björneborg and came to stay at my hotel.

Our only distraction was to watch companies of Red Guards drilling in the streets and listen to the gruesome tales we heard from our new Finnish acquaintances at the hotel about executions by the Red Finns of the prisoners and suspects captured by them. However, the Red authorities did not interfere with the life of our group at the hotel. To those of us he had met over a glass of beer the former Björneborg chief of police liberally distributed White Guard certificates to protect us in case of the capture of the city by General Mannerheim's detachments. At the time that prospect seemed quite remote and we were all impatiently awaiting news of the Swedish steamer.

But suddenly we ceased to wait—on learning that she had been caught in an ice-jam and sunk!

Looking over the situation once more, I decided to go to Åbo and thence across the ice by sleigh to the Åland Islands, where I hoped to get aboard one of the small Swedish steamers plying between Eckere and Stockholm. A very attractive Russian couple, Mr. and Mrs. Baer, decided to do likewise. The Crosleys, knowing that there was grave risk of their falling into the hands of a German landing party that was expected to take possession of the Åland Islands practically at any moment, decided to try to make their way through the Red and White lines, using the prestige of their American diplomatic passports.

As I had a civilian's passport, and warfare between Germany and Russia was ended, I had hopes that I might get through, even if the Germans occupied Eckere before my arrival there.

So I parted company with the Crosleys, who later succeeded in getting through both the Red and White Finnish lines in the very venturesome manner so well described by Mrs. Crosley in her *Intimate Letters from Petrograd*.

At Åbo the local Soviet authorities told us that we had to apply again for our exit visa. The young fellow in charge of the visa bureau was very unpleasant to all of us, singling me out for a particular investigation. Finally he said: "I cannot let you go. How do I know that you are really in need of medical treatment abroad? How do you expect to make a living there anyhow? This story doesn't seem to hold water."

My pointing out to him that I was able to speak and write several European languages and would be, therefore, able to take care of myself in Europe, did not make the slightest impression on him.

"Comrades, we must not repeat the fatal mistakes Trotskii is making at Petrograd. We are a law unto ourselves here and will not let you pass."

Then I attacked the problem from another angle: "Very well. Suppose that I admit that you have reasons to doubt that my health needs treatment at Salzo Maggiore, as stated in my passport. Would a certificate to that effect from a local doctor satisfy you?"

After several more objections, the young fellow agreed to this proposal and I set out in company with Mr. Baer (who was most helpful to me during the entire incident) to look for a Finnish doctor and obtain my certificate. These repeated failures to get out of the country were beginning to get on my nerves and I was somewhat jittery as I rang the bell of one of the leading practitioners of the city. When I was admitted to his study I told him frankly about the situation and added that I had every reason to believe that I was likely to face a firing squad should I be turned back to Petrograd by the local komissar. The doctor immediately wrote out the certificate required and got one of his colleagues to countersign it, absolutely refusing to accept any fee. I shall always remember that Finnish gentleman with the deepest gratitude and am hoping that he may some day see these lines.

Upon presentation of the certificate the visa was finally granted and I was all set to go to the Aland Islands. It was now necessary to settle the problem of choosing a traveling companion, as the sleigh could hold two people and there was no sense in going alone when it was so easy to halve the expenses of transportation. The Baer couple naturally were traveling together. There were a number of Americans and English people who were preparing to start on the same journey the next morning. I knew two or three of them. However, after thinking the matter over, I decided that it would be better not to travel in the same sleigh with a Britisher or an American, as this would make me more suspect to the Germans should they stop us en route. After looking over some other possibilities, I decided to approach a Jewish merchant from Copenhagen, who told me that he had lived in Hamburg before the war. He agreed to hire a sleigh jointly with me, and turned out to be a most pleasant companion.

So early the next morning we set out, a caravan of some ten or twelve sleighs. We were all expecting that our passports would be again inspected on the city line. To our great surprise we found that there were no posts at all and that there was no one to look over our documents. So all my efforts the evening before to persuade the Ko-

missar to issue the visa were entirely unnecessary. I might just as well have left without any visa at all!

As we were making our way between the small islands on the Gulf of Bothnia we soon began to encounter armed groups of Finnish farmers with white bands on their sleeves. They did not make any attempt to stop us, but marched past us at a fast pace in military formation, armed with rifles, pistols, and the sharp curved *pukko* knives of their race.

The first night out we spent at a small island in a Finnish fisherman's house. There was not very much that he could offer us to eat. We had to satisfy ourselves with a few salted *Strommlinger* and a crust of dry bread for our supper, and a cup of some coffee substitute with another crust of bread for breakfast. This did not dim our spirits at all, nor did the fact that we all had to sleep on the bare floor of the house. The border was near and we had every reason to hope that the next day we should embark in the Swedish steamer for Stockholm.

We started very early the next morning. As we were approaching the larger island of Aland, we were informed by some Finns that the Germans had landed at Eckere and were taking over the control of the island. There was no choice for me but to continue to Eckere. Although the peace treaty made a neutral nation of Russia and my passport bore no reference to my service in the navy, I had more than one reason to be apprehensive as to what would happen to me should the German authorities decide that I was suspect and send me to some German port for investigation by the Intelligence Service. I thought at the time (perhaps I was flattering myself) that my photograph was likely to be in every naval intelligence office, because of my service as naval attaché both at Washington and London, and that they would have my card on file which would easily establish that I was not a civilian, as my passport stated, but a former officer of the navy. What would happen then was not quite clear to me. I thought, however, that at best I should get into a concentration camp for the duration of the war, unless a worse fate befell me for traveling in mufti through the German lines. However, I decided to risk it, as there was obviously no sense in my returning to Åbo.

About noontime we came to the first German outposts. The sentry challenged us: "Who goes there?"

My traveling companion answered in perfect German: "A Jew from Hamburg."

The soldiers laughed and let us pass without any further examination. In the same manner we passed some more German posts until

we reached a more important one, where a young officer, obviously a lower-middle-class fellow, posing as the traditional Prussian officer type, became quite inquisitive.

He was very insulting to my Jewish friend and asked: "Is this your son?"

When I replied in the negative, he shouted at me: "I'm not talking to you! Speak when you are spoken to! And where did you hide yourself during the war?"

By that time I was thoroughly aroused and, throwing all caution to the winds, I said in German that while he was obviously only an *ersatz* officer, I had had the honor of serving in a Guard regiment wearing the iron cross as a regimental badge, and would he please be more courteous to an officer and a gentleman.

The youngster was taken aback by my vehemence and let us pass without further ado.

By sunset we reached Eckere and to our dismay saw the smoke of the departing Swedish steamer on the horizon. We had missed the boat!

In the roadstead lay a German battleship, a couple of merchant ships converted for army transport service, and several smaller craft. German soldiers were busily unloading guns, ammunition, and equipment. A Swedish battleship was also lying at anchor.

Upon looking for shelter we found a room in the house of a Finnish farmer and were preparing to spend another night on the bare floor when a German sergeant and some soldiers came in and made a brief examination of us, asking about our nationality, occupation, and destination.

As soon as I had a chance to be alone, I tore out the page from my passport with the British visa obtained at Petrograd, so that the last visa on it remained the Norwegian one. I was fairly certain that the Germans would not let me pass if they knew I intended going to England, and decided to take one more chance rather than be delayed in getting to London.

In the morning all the members of our caravan were asked to come to the temporary office established by the German Naval Intelligence in one of the houses of Eckere.

In answering the young German officer, I said that I was going to Norway where I had some business interests, that my family were all living there and that I had resided in the Baltic Provinces but was unable to remain there because of the persecutions of the Reds. As references I gave the names of a number of Baltic Province noblemen

whom I knew and who bore illustrious crusaders' names that I was sure would be known to the officer who was examining me. However, my depositions did not seem very satisfactory to the Intelligence Officer as ultimately I was directed to take my bags to one of the German transport ships where I was assigned a room. This, however, was better than the fate of the British and Americans who were members of our caravan. They were all herded into the hold of the same ship and treated much more harshly than I and the other Russians in the party. The Swiss and two or three Swedes were left free.

The turn things were taking did not please me at all, and I took a walk on the deck of the transport to see how the land lay. The Swedish battleship was anchored not very far away, but there was a line of German sentries on the ice between it and the ship on which I was a prisoner. I tried to figure out whether there was a chance of creeping past these sentries to the Swedish ship without being noticed, and came to the conclusion that this was impossible. While I was turning this over in my head, I noticed a German naval officer with captain's stripes, walking on the poop deck. He had a full beard and his features struck me as familiar.

Trying to remember under what circumstances I might have met him before the war, I recalled the incidents of my several visits to Kiel, the meeting of the various German naval vessels in the West Indies. Suddenly the whole thing came to me in a flash: I had seen that man no doubt in the West Indies, probably at Barbados. He was undoubtedly a naval reserve officer, and from this it was easy to conjecture that he probably commanded one of the German merchant marine ships which were in the West Indian trade before the war. Much as I tried, I could not remember where I could have met him. However, a plausible hypothesis suggested itself: The consular agent for Russia at Bridgetown in Barbados had also acted for Germany before the war. This was my clue. So I walked up to the German naval officer and wished him a very good afternoon in German. He replied courteously, and I introduced myself. Then I said that we had met before the war in the West Indies. He replied that he had been in the West Indian trade for a number of years, but could not recall the occasion upon which we had met. Then I reminded him of the name of the German consul at Barbados and spoke about his family and the good times we had had at his hospitable house.

The cue worked. The German remembered the consul and apparently liked him a great deal, as he immediately inquired about the various members of the family, asking whether I had any news

from them during the war. This led to a very pleasant conversation and ultimately I was invited to dine with the Captain of the ship (as my new acquaintance turned out to be).

We had a couple of bottles of beer and some *ersatz* brandy at dinner and I broached the question of my release. The Captain said that there was nothing that he could do about it, and inquired what I was doing in the West Indies before the war.

In the meantime I had worked out in my mind the answer to that question which I was anticipating from the outset:

"Do you recall the schooner *Irma* under the Danish flag? Her home port was St. Thomas. I had charge of her for a few months."

This was partially true, as the *Irma* was chartered by the officers of the *Rossia* in 1913 while we were at St. Thomas, and according to the ship's papers I was its master. I figured that the German would not know that the schooner was chartered by the Russians but was likely to have seen the ship somewhere.

My answer satisfied him and he said something about the nice sailing capacities of the *Irma*.

The next morning I met him on deck again and asked him whether during the night any happy thought had occurred to him how to arrange for me to go to Stockholm on the next steamer. He smiled and said: "Yes. I think there is a way. Write to the Captain of the Swedish warship that you are a neutral and were detained on neutral soil by a belligerent nation and that you are asking for his intercession in your behalf as the senior officer of a neutral power. Should he claim you, I will then arrange for you to go over to his ship."

Naturally I did not delay a minute in writing that letter, mentioning in it as references the names of all my Swedish friends and former colleagues in Washington and London. I also mentioned that matter to the Baers, who wrote a similar letter.

A reply arrived promptly, claiming our release by the Germans. An hour later I was shaking the German Captain's hand and thanking him for his hospitality. In company with the Baers, the Swiss, and the Swedes, we embarked in the small Swedish steamer that had in the meanwhile returned from Stockholm, and the next morning we landed in Sweden.

On my return to London I found that in my absence the British Government had seized the funds of the naval attaché, and that, therefore, the problem of taking care of the officers and men of the Russian naval vessels stationed in England had become a very acute one. Incidentally, it made it impossible for me to get reimbursed for

my expenses on the trip beyond the small amount I had drawn in advance, so that the trip remained in more than one sense a private enterprise as far as I was concerned.

I drew up my report in writing, copies of which were sent to the various naval attachés. Then I began to think about my own future. As I stated in that report, I regarded the Soviet power as firmly established and in the process of building up a strong armed force on a new foundation. I did not feel inclined to cast in my lot with the Soviet Government because of my views on the Brest-Litovsk Peace and the position taken by Lenin as to the dictatorship of the party, which I interpreted at the time correctly enough as the dictatorship of a very small group at the top. I decided, therefore, to remain abroad and to become an émigré. As for what to do next, I had several fields to choose from.

As a first move I asked to be relieved of my duties as assistant naval attaché and, through my old friend Grégorii Vilenkin, obtained a position in a city office of a transportation company. Very soon, however, it became quite clear to me that it was emotionally impossible for me to stay in a cushy job in the city while war was still going on, so I decided to offer my services to the British Government, and wrote a letter to that effect to the Admiralty. Receiving no reply beyond the official acknowledgment of my letter, I made inquiries at one of the regiments of the Guards as to whether they were in need of volunteers. The answer was in the affirmative, and after calling upon the Adjutant and Colonel of that regiment, I went to the recruiting station and took my medical examination for enlistment in the Guards. I am proud to say that I passed with flying colors in class A. When it came to taking the oath of allegiance, I asked whether it was clearly understood that I wanted to serve with that particular regiment. The answer was in the negative. Then I said that I wanted first of all to clear up that question. Thereupon a rather complicated situation developed and I shuffled back and forth from one office at Whitehall to another without being able to get anyone to promise me positively that I should be permitted to serve with that particular regiment of the Guards.

Then one day I met in Piccadilly a British Admiral whom I knew quite well. He asked me what I was doing in mufti when every able-bodied man was needed to win the war. I told him briefly about my letter to the Admiralty and my attempts to enlist as a private in the Guards. He smiled and said that I should hear from the Admiralty very soon.

He was as good as his word, and within a few days I received a large blue envelope containing a Royal Commission making me a lieutenant in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. I called up my tailor and told him to change the stripes on my uniforms, bought myself new cap badges and a sword, and was ready for duty under the ensign of St. George.

My service with the British navy will not be touched upon in this book. It is a separate chapter of my life and stands apart from my other experiences during the Great War and the Civil War. Some day I may be able to describe my experiences while wearing the Royal Crown on my badge and buttons.

There were two sequels to my trip to Petrograd which both occurred shortly before I left London to take up my duties with the British navy.

One morning, as I was working at my desk at home, the telephone rang and the Grand Duchess George's voice said: "Queen Alexandra wants you to come and have tea with her at Marlborough House tomorrow. The King will also be there. They want to speak to you about your trip to Russia and the Emperor's family."

To this I answered that I should be delighted to come.

Less than two hours after that conversation I received a call from the Admiralty instructing me to leave the next morning by train for Penzance and to report there to the Senior Naval Officer for further orders.

Since I had understood, from some hints thrown out to me at the Admiralty, that I was supposed to go to the West Indies to look after some submarine chasers there, this order surprised me a great deal, as I knew that passengers destined for the West Indies were not likely to embark at Penzance. The fact that the call from the Admiralty came right upon the invitation to Marlborough House added to my wonderment.

However, there was little I could do about it. So I called the Grand Duchess and said that I had received orders to leave London the next morning and that was all I could say about the matter. Would Her Highness kindly transmit my regrets to Their Majesties as to my inability to come to Marlborough House tomorrow?

The Grand Duchess appeared to be much surprised by such a sudden dénouement of the invitation she had passed on to me, and promised to give my message to Their Majesties.

The other incident had to do with my call on the Grand Duke George at Helsingfors.

Upon returning to London from Petrograd, one of my first calls was on the Grand Duchess, his wife. I told her about my interview with the Grand Duke at the Nya Societetshuset and of his refusal to follow my advice to leave the country with me. The Grand Duchess asked me to stay for tea, and as there was still an hour or so before tea time, I went to Regent's Park with her children and the young Baroness de Stoeckl, the daughter of the Grand Duchess' equerry. As we walked up and down the avenues of the park that misty afternoon, I had to describe in detail to the children how the Grand Duke was looking when I saw him last, what he had said, what greetings he had given me for them, etc.

When we came home from the park and entered the Grand Ducal residence, I realized that something terrible had just happened. The household were all very upset and some of them were weeping. I learned that a cable had just arrived announcing the Grand Duke's execution at Petrograd.

That gallant gentleman went to his doom, his head high and unafraid, as I learned later. There was nothing I could do at the moment to help the bereaved family in their grief, and upon taking leave, I went on foot to my rooms under the steady drizzle of the winter rain.

PART II

OFF TO THE CIVIL WAR

1919

IN FEBRUARY 1919 the World War was over, as far as I was concerned. After a few weeks at the Third General Hospital at Clapham Common, London, I was permitted to leave the hospital to complete my convalescence from double pneumonia and the consequences of a mine explosion.

My friend Baron George Taube, a Naval Guardsman connected with the Russian Embassy, gave me asylum at his Chelsea flat. George's hospitality was generous, as always. Thanks to his friendly helpfulness I began to come back to life again and gradually recovered the will to live, which had almost completely deserted me during the months spent at the various hospitals.

It was at this time that I decided, for several reasons, to leave the British service. In the first place, I did not want to return to Archangel and continue to take part in that venture of the Allies which I regarded as futile and foredoomed to failure.* Secondly, I was very angry at the invitation sent by Mr. Lloyd George to the various Russian factions to meet at the Prinkipo Islands to settle their differences. I thought that I could clearly see the real reason for that invitation, which appeared to me the acme of hypocrisy. Electioneering slogans of the "Hang the Kaiser" and "Let the Germans pay" type also impressed

* The post-war attempts of the Allies to stem the tide of Bolshevism grew out of plans to build up an Eastern Front against Germany with the help of the pro-Ally elements in Russia. The Archangel campaign, the Siberian intervention and the other armed attacks of the Allies on Soviet Russia were the outcome of these plans. The Russian White movement, in most of its phases, was closely connected with these interventions, although it pursued entirely different ends. The various White groups were unified by their common wish to put an end to the Bolshevik rule in Russia. They consisted of elements of very different political coloring—from ardent monarchists to moderate socialists. The civil war in Russia lasted for more than four years, beginning at the end of 1917.

me most painfully, as I saw in them the seeds of another war in our generation. Urged by these impressions, I decided to go to Siberia to serve under Kolchak, who was at that time at the head of the Siberian White Government and had assumed the somewhat exotic title of Supreme Ruler of Russia.

My plan to go to Siberia was not the result of any belief in the probability of a White victory. Since 1917 I had been most pessimistic about the outcome of any armed struggle with the Bolsheviks, as I believed that the masses of the peasantry would not support any anti-Bolshevik movement until they had had a taste of the amenities of life under Communist rule, and that the middle-class Russian citizens were not sufficiently numerous or adequate to enable the White armies to win. The White army leaders and their Government also provided me with many a doubt as to their ability to match the Red leadership. In other words, I was not bullish at all as to a White victory, but rather expected the Reds to win. I went to Siberia because I felt that no good Russian could possibly stand aside and watch the conflict from a safe distance. I had an idea that unless I plunged into the midst of the civil struggle I would forfeit the right to call myself a Russian and would never understand what it was all about. I chose Siberia rather than any other White Russian territory because I knew Kolchak to be an honorable man and a sincere patriot—without any illusions, however, as to his political ability; also because several naval officers who were among my best friends at the Naval College and in the Baltic Fleet were supporting Kolchak, so that I knew I should not be entirely among strangers.

As I think of those days now, I believe that the rain and fog of a London winter and the poor state of my lungs (I was frequently coughing blood) combined to color my ideas as to the outcome of the struggle with the Reds. However, they could only have accentuated the trend of thought which had already been formed in 1917 and confirmed early in 1918 when I visited Petrograd. I was fully aware of the caliber of leadership provided by Lenin and Trotskii and I regarded them as men of considerable mental stature, endowed with a tremendous driving power which I did not observe among the White leaders I knew.

After reaching the decision to proceed to Siberia I applied for my discharge from the British naval service. This proved easy, for I had spent more than forty-five consecutive days in the hospital and was therefore entitled to priority in demobilization. The British au-

thorities were very generous and offered transportation and maintenance to any point where I wanted to be demobilized. I indicated Vladivostok, which I could reasonably claim under the regulations. After filling innumerable forms and interviewing a number of officials I succeeded in completing all the formalities and was ready to leave England at the end of February. My pay papers were lost somewhere between the paymaster of H.M.S. *Glory* and the Admiralty. However, I was permitted to draw against the arrears in pay and discharge moneys, and left London with some sixty pounds over and above the incidental expenses en route to Vladivostok. That I was thus practically penniless did not worry me in the least. I was well provided with clothing, both in the guise of uniforms as well as "civvies," had several pistols, a pair of excellent field glasses, several pairs of stout boots for campaign wear, and my equipment also included a dozen volumes of poems by Frost, Shelley, Whitman, Donne, and some Russian poets.

Nevertheless, the maid at Taube's flat obviously regarded me as a pauper and felt sorry for me. I had quite a difficulty in getting her to accept a five-pound tip when I was leaving. She apparently thought that I was more in need of that money than she. Only after assuring her that I was going out to find some gold mines in Siberia and should therefore not need any paper money could I prevail upon her to accept it. There were no farewell parties, and only George Taube, faithful friend that he was, came to see me off at the station. We drove down in a taxi together to Waterloo Station where I took the boat train for the *Adriatic*, sailing from Liverpool.

The crossing to New York was uneventful and uninteresting. I was assigned a berth in a room with a young Canadian aviator and sat at table with some Australian politicians who had been connected with the army during the war.

There was a colored division of American troops aboard (I think it was the Buffalo Division). It struck me at the time as very remarkable that the colored officers of that Division were not permitted to dine at the same time as the other passengers and that they were assigned separate social rooms, while white sergeants were freely mixing with the passengers and in some instances, as in the case of the Australians, sitting at the same table with officers. As I had never lived in the American South it was difficult for me to understand that the uniform of a commissioned officer of the United States Army did not carry full equality for its wearer regardless of the color of his skin. I

still think that the arrangement was wrong. Either these men should not be given commissions at all or, once they are given commissions, there should be no discrimination between them and the white officers.

The reception of the *Adriatic* in New York was festive and noisy. There were reception committees and bands galore. I was glad to see the city I had grown to like so well in that mood of welcome to its returning sons who fought the nation's war.

A few days later found me at San Francisco, about to embark on the *Ecuador* for the long slow journey to Yokohama via Honolulu. There was a day of leisurely shopping, a dinner at the Poodle Dog Restaurant where because of my uniform I was lionized by some delightful Californians who insisted on taking me round the Barbary Coast night clubs. The next morning I went on board the *Ecuador* with a frightful hangover and dreading the effects of a rough sea on my digestive system. That voyage was a real boon to me. Beautiful weather, a calm passage, regular hours of sleep and meals did more to restore me physically than all the months at hospitals and in London. I spent most of my waking hours sitting lazily in a deck chair reading poetry or novels borrowed from the ship's library or, perhaps, talking to my neighbors.

There were some very pleasant people aboard and only the mood I was in at the time prevented the passage from being very gay, instead of restful. There was a charming lady from Shanghai returning to her modiste establishment, a pretty Russian girl going to join her husband somewhere in China, and among the male passengers there were two or three American business men who proved to be interesting conversationalists. So the leisurely days went by while the ship made its way to Japan. Honolulu provided a pleasant interlude with its leis, diving boys, a trip to Waikiki Beach, which, by the way, was a tremendous disappointment to me, with its grayish sand and rather tawdry crowd.

Yokohama was also a disappointment. I knew that port from the old photographs brought home by my father in the eighties, and was prepared for a pageant of Japanese life as I remembered it from these pictures. Here was neither flesh, fowl, nor good red herring; the city was neither European, American, nor yet entirely Japanese, but a conglomeration of all. Some of the European houses on the Bluff were pleasant enough, and I liked the old Grand Hotel which had somehow the flavor of the East and of adventure, with its broad terrace and excellent, unobtrusive service. However, the general impression

was not prepossessing and Yokohama looked to me like Oriental bric-a-brac in a Victorian drawing room.

As I had a couple of days to make my next connection to Vladivostok from Tsuruga, I looked up Moissei Ginsburg, that friend and patron of the entire Russian navy, a remarkable Jewish gentleman who had stood in good stead to the Russian fleet in the Far East at various critical moments. He was known to most officers of the navy, and to the younger ones he was a sort of legendary figure of the days of the occupation of Port Arthur and the voyage East of the *Rozhdestvenskii* Squadron.

This shrewd and kindly man, a true Russian patriot, who later gave most of his fortune to help indigent Russian naval officers in exile or to assist the widows of those assassinated by the seamen during the Revolution, had a beautiful home on the Bluff and maintained an office in the business section of Yokohama.

Ginsburg received me very cordially, inquired about my parents and gave me news of my aunt and uncle who had stayed for a while at Yokohama before going over to live at Kharbin. He invited me to lunch with his family at the Grand Hotel.

The next day I saw him at his office again and he said: "What's the use of your going to Omsk? There are plenty of people there without you. After all, it is not a naval officer's job to fight on land. Better stay here in Yokohama. I'll take you into my firm and we'll supply Admiral Kolchak with all the munitions he needs. You would be much more useful to him in that capacity than at Omsk, and incidentally you could build up a business career for yourself. As the future of Russia is, to say the least, rather unpredictable right now, it might be well for at least one member of your family to have his feet on firm ground again." This was a rather startling offer. I thanked Ginsburg very warmly for it, saying that I would love to work with him, but that it would be rather difficult for me to devote myself to my personal interests while my friends were with Kolchak, fighting the Reds. My staying in Yokohama in a commercial capacity would look rather bad, and I was certain that my family would not care to see me start on a business venture at my age when I could be useful in the fighting line. In principle I felt, however, that Ginsburg was right and told him I thought he should try to establish a munition supply firm, as I was certain that the supply end was in a chaotic state in Siberia and that it would be better for the Siberian authorities to deal with a person whose reputation and character were well known, rather than with entirely unknown people. To this I added that I did

not expect to have anything to do with military supplies and should not be in a position to influence the Omsk Government in that respect.

It was cherry-blossom time, and as I went into Tokio in the electric train I saw, here and there, pretty glimpses of scenery on the rather shoddy, semi-industrialized background of the landscape. The mass of cherry blossoms against the gray walls of the Imperial Palace gave me an idea of what Japan had been in the days of my father's service in the East, but failed to reconcile me with its present aspect.

The Russian Ambassador, Krupenskii, received me, and I spent a day with Rear Admiral Dudorov, the naval attaché, who had left his post of technical head of the Ministry of the Navy for the Tokio position just in the nick of time, before the Bolshevik seizure of power.

Krupenskii was somewhat nonplussed by my pessimism both as to the future assistance by the Allies to Kolchak, and the final outcome of the struggle with the Reds. He frankly told me: "Why do you go to Siberia at all, feeling apprehensive as you do about the success of the White cause? What prompts you to engage in an enterprise that is in your opinion doomed to failure?" It was somewhat difficult for me to explain concisely to the Ambassador my conception of the course of the Revolution and the reasons that were sending me thousands of miles to the Siberian battlefields. One thing, however, I made clear to him: that in my opinion the prospect of success was not always the most important consideration when reaching a decision for a line of action, and that sometimes it was worth while and important to go out and face disaster, provided one's line of action was in accord with one's general viewpoint. And after all, one's judgment as to the success and failure of any enterprise of that magnitude might be entirely wrong.

Whatever I said to Krupenskii, I am afraid that I left him considerably puzzled over what I really was about, and perhaps with some faint suspicion as to the adequacy of my mental processes.

At the naval attaché's house I met my classmate, Alexander Tiulfiaev, whom I remembered as a dashing, rather reckless young fellow, anxious at all times to take even quite unnecessary risks. He was by this time, however, an entirely different man.

What he told me about his experiences at Sebastopol during the massacres of officers in the winter of 1917-1918 and his subsequent tribulations on the way to Japan across Siberia made me understand what had changed him. For the time being at least he was a broken

man, completely shattered by the impact of the horrors of the several months preceding his escape abroad. Later I saw many like him in Soviet prisons. At that time, however, he was the first I had met so completely devastated by the revolutionary inferno.

The trip to Tsuruga was dull and uneventful. The Russian Volunteer Fleet steamer I was to take at that port for Vladivostok made on me the worst possible impression. Her passenger accommodations were dirty, meals were served casually on carelessly laid tables. Her stewards were untidy and discourteous. It was like plunging back into the midst of 1917 Russia again. I was glad when the journey was over and we had entered the harbor of Vladivostok.

Among the passport control officers who boarded the steamer there was a youngster with the stripes of a Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve lieutenant on his sleeve. He spotted me immediately and managed to cut all the red tape for me in record time. Then he took me aside and asked whether I really wanted to be demobilized or whether I should prefer to remain in active service.

This offer, or rather suggestion, coming from the young officer, was quite unexpected and I inquired what particular work the navy had in mind for me in Siberia. I was then told that there was a British Naval Mission in Siberia with Captain Wolfe-Murray, R.N., at its head and that it was thought that it would be a good idea to augment his staff by making me one of his assistants.

As my mind had already been made up a long time before my arrival at Vladivostok, I answered in the negative and said I preferred to be demobilized as soon as possible as I was planning to join Admiral Kolchak's naval forces.

The British Senior Naval Officer received me on board the H.M.S. *Kent*. After a few minutes my connection with the British naval service was severed and I was given the demobilization documents certifying my honorable discharge from His Majesty's forces and stating that on certain occasions I was authorized to wear the naval uniform.

The officers of the *Kent* chatted in a friendly fashion with me and offered a drink. Then I said good-bye to them and left the *Kent* to report to the Russian naval H.Q. The dilapidated pavement, the paint peeling off the stucco walls of the houses, the general effect of shabbiness and untidiness of the streets of Vladivostok, further accentuated the impression made by the Volunteer Fleet steamer. There were swarms of officers and men in foreign uniforms crowding the sidewalks. Only here and there a smart youngster of the Vladivostok

Naval College, white gloved and well turned out, reminded one that Vladivostok had once been the main Russian naval station in the Pacific.

At the naval headquarters, after a perfunctory conversation with the Senior Naval Officer, Rear Admiral Timirev, I went over for a long talk with Vuich, a Naval Guardsman in charge of the Operation Division of the naval forces of the Whites in the Pacific.

Vuich outlined to me the various operations conducted by the small naval forces at Vladivostok and told me about the unfortunate incident in Nakhodka Bay, where a detachment of midshipmen and army officers attempted a landing and were repulsed with losses by the local peasant guerillas.

Upon listening to Vuich for a while I asked him to tell me frankly what he thought of the prospects of the struggle with the Reds. Shrugging his shoulders he merely said, "Well, you know Kolchak, don't you?"

The same day I spoke to another pessimist, Count Sologub, a colonel of the General Staff whom I had known at Petrograd and London. He took me to his room in a shabby hotel and carefully outlined the progress of the spring offensive of the Siberian White armies against the forces of the Bolsheviks.

"Lebedev, the G.H.Q. Chief of Staff does not appear to be a brilliant strategist by any means," said Sologub. "Perhaps he has only very little control over that military politician, General Gaida, commanding the Siberian Army, and General Khanzhin who has charge of the Western Army. Anyhow, I am unable to make any sense of what the armies are doing. By advancing on different fronts simultaneously in fan formation they are thinning out their forces that are already none too strong. This means in my mind that they are courting disaster. There is another point to be considered: To what extent can the new levies be relied upon as fighting material? Will they fight, or will they murder their officers and go over to the Reds? The volunteer units that started the struggle have lost heavily and it remains to be seen whether the Siberian peasantry as well as the men recruited in European Russia will fight as well or fight at all. The withdrawal of the Czechoslovak divisions from the front is another disturbing factor. All in all, I am afraid that Admiral Kolchak's forces are moving toward disaster and, what is in my opinion even worse, that that disaster will spread because of the incapacity of the White leaders. A concentrated movement, in one sector only, might bring remarkable results, but the present crude attempt to apply World

War strategy, as practised on the Russian front, to a Civil War situation is bound to end badly. The enemy will no doubt concentrate, somewhere in a strategically important point, a strong maneuver group and will then strike at the thin, weakened line of the White armies. Then there will be a headlong retreat and perhaps an irretrievable loss, since there will be neither men nor material left for a new offensive this year."

As both Vuich and Sologub were intelligent and thoughtful men, their pessimism made a great impression on me, confirming as it did my own surmises.

As the time to leave for Omsk was approaching I bought some Russian shoulder straps and a Russian cockade for my cap. The lady of the house where I was camping very kindly sewed the shoulder straps on my British uniform and I was transformed again not only on paper, but in outward appearance as well, into a Russian officer.

The impression I was carrying with me to Omsk was decidedly a very disturbing one. The American military authorities at Vladivostok were obviously none too sympathetic to the White Russians, and quite a few people I spoke to among my friends thought that the American contingent would rather fight the Whites than the Reds at any time, and that this was not by any means entirely the fault of the American military. The White Russians, on the other hand, failed to organize any military force capable of controlling the situation should the Allied troops withdraw from Vladivostok. As far as I could judge, apart from a cavalry regiment and some military cadet schools and the Naval College, there were only a few officers' companies that could be relied upon.

The Russian officers at Vladivostok were none too happy to see the foreign military behaving very much as they might in China, and treating their Russian colleagues with friendly condescension.

But what disturbed me more than anything else was that the local peasants were in open revolt against the Whites, in spite of the fact that there was no landlord problem in Siberia.

It was with a feeling of relief that I made ready to leave Vladivostok. Life there gave me an almost physical feeling of nausea, and it never occurred to me to apply for the command of one of the ships of the naval forces of the Pacific.

JOURNEY TO OMSK

As soon as I entered the Vladivostok Railway Station I realized what a difference it made to be in Russian uniform in a city occupied by the Allies. I was promptly informed that the sleeping-car accommodation was "for foreigners only" and anyhow not for officers of my rank, and that my baggage must not exceed a certain rather limited number of pounds. I managed to circumvent the baggage regulations with the assistance of a British transport officer (who noticed that the Russian shoulder straps were sewn on a British coat), but I could not obtain a berth in the sleeper. So that was that, and with every unkind thought of the Allied control of the railways I climbed into an old second-class car for the long journey to Omsk.

In a way this second-class assignment proved a great boon to me. I was thrown with a large group of people of all walks of life: school teachers, employees of the coöperatives, temporary officers, shopkeepers, petty government officials, with a sprinkling of the better-to-do farmers. At first they shied at the strange combination of insignia on my uniform. Over tea and sandwiches, however, I gradually came to know them quite well. The long journey provided me with a remarkable opportunity to discuss the various problems of political, social, and economic life in Siberia, about which I was so interested to learn, with people who were a good cross-section of the Siberian middle class.

The mood of my fellow travelers was a strange one. They were not hostile to Admiral Kolchak and his government. On the other hand, they were not satisfied with it either. It fell very much short of their expectations and ideals. As I became aware of this, I tried to find the roots of their attitude.

There were several reasons for dissatisfaction as far as these representatives of the urban middle class and of the richer farmers were concerned. The trading element were much displeased with the limita-

tions of transportation for privately owned goods on the Trans-Siberian, and hinted quite openly that they had to pay graft to move their merchandise. Even at that, they claimed, they were unable to move more than one-tenth of what they needed for their customers. The more radically inclined teachers and coöperative employees had a feeling that Kolchak aimed at the restoration of the old régime. They pointed out to me that the officers were wearing shoulder straps again, that the Siberian green and white flag and cockade were discarded, and spoke of Kolchak's entourage as frankly reactionary. The peasants complained about the difficulty they had in obtaining manufactured goods. When they came to know me a little better they told me of the depredations of the Atamans such as Krasilnikov and Anenkov, of the high-handed way these chiefs had with the peasantry, of the reluctance of the peasants to furnish recruits for the army, and of the rapid depreciation of the currency which was hurting the peasants very much.

Some of the younger temporary officers were openly hostile to the Allied methods of helping Kolchak wage war against the Reds. The Czechs were quite unpopular, and I heard many a tale of their requisitioning all kinds of goods without any military reason, seizing the best rolling stock and living on the fat of the land, while the Russian army units had to be pleased with what was left over by the Czechs. The officers' pay in depreciated Siberian paper money was pitifully small, and those without private means and burdened with families did not know how to make ends meet.

However, the general undertone of all these conversations was the lack of conviction that the goal set by the Whites was a worthy one. The way they understood it, Kolchak was waging war on the Reds so as to reconstitute the western (Russian) front in order to fight the Germans. As the collapse of the German armies after the Armistice was known to them, they could not see any sense in that program. Besides, they considered that the Allies were merely using the White army at a catpaw to further their own ends. The more intelligent among them spoke about the lack of a definite political program and said that the "Down with the Reds" attitude of the Kolchak Government did not constitute a political credo worth fighting for.

As a young infantry lieutenant, a former coöperative employee, said to me:

"We want to know what we're fighting for. We don't want to be treated by all these foreigners as some sort of inferior breed of animals. To hell with them all. I have nothing against Kolchak. He seems

to be a fine fellow. But the people around him are either political four-flushers or tools of the foreigners."

A young British officer with a platoon of the Royal Marine Light Infantry represented the Allies' armed forces on the train. He soon spotted the oxydized buttons on my tunic and asked whether I had served with the Naval Division. My conversations with him provided the other aspect of the Siberian sideshow—what it meant to the Allied military—telling me what the Allied officers thought of Kolchak and his chances of success and, for which I am eternally grateful to him, he became my shield and buckler against Ataman Semenov's ruffians.

The marine officer's help came just in the nick of time while we were traveling through Semenov's territory, Transbaikalia, which he held and ruled like a medieval robber baron, aided and abetted by the Japanese military.

It came about this way. At Kharbin a young Cossack subaltern joined our train and soon proved to be an infernal nuisance. He drank heavily and did not know how to carry his liquor; thought it his business to interfere with anyone he pleased on the train, and generally showed off as though he were master of all he surveyed. This subaltern had managed to wangle a sleeping-car compartment all to himself and was traveling in style, with several bottles of the atrocious Kharbin concoctions labeled fancifully as Benedictine, Chartreuse, and Cognac on his table.

As I was passing his compartment on my way from the dining car, he leaned out and asked me to come in and to have a drink with him. I declined with thanks. The Cossack continued to insist, saying that he wanted to drink with me to the success of the White armies. Under these circumstances I had no choice but to accept his invitation, and sat on the couch of his compartment sipping one or other of the filthy *ersatz* liqueurs manufactured by some Chinamen at Kharbin.

The subaltern soon changed the conversation from the military situation at the Ural front to the behavior of the bluejackets during the Revolution. He said, among other things, that any man with a tattooed anchor or other emblem indicating the possibility of his connection with the navy would be shot on sight in Semenov's territory. I remarked that a good many naval officers also had tattooed designs on their arms and that it was wrong to regard all seamen as Bolsheviks or murderers. I told him that in my experience I had found the general run of seamen very decent fellows; that it was only the revolutionary delirium of 1917 that had exposed them to the influence of demagogic agitators, which led to some atrocious terrorism on their

part, but, at that, I was convinced that they were no worse than the average Russian workers and peasants; after all it was not their fault that they were not properly educated in their native villages and that we ourselves, as the ruling class, were responsible for their ignorance and brutality.

By this time the Transbaikalian Cossack was pretty far gone in his cups and did not take kindly to my remarks. He drew himself up and asked me whether I presumed to criticize Ataman Semenov in his own territory. As I did not want to have a row with a soak I merely replied that, as I had never brought Semenov's name into the conversation, I failed to understand his allusion. I said I was merely giving him some information as to the bluejackets whom I was in a position to know better than he because of my connection with the Imperial navy for some ten-odd years.

The Cossack seemed to be pacified and poured me another drink. As I was making to leave, he suddenly cried, "Why do you wear this foreign uniform?"

I explained to him that I had served with the British navy for a while and that I had no Russian uniforms suitable for campaigning on land.

The Cossack continued to insist that it was not right that I should wear a foreign uniform in Russia, as I should have no difficulty in having a Russian one made at Vladivostok or Kharbin. Restraining my rising temper, I explained to the drunkard patiently that I was in a hurry to get to Omsk and could not very well delay my journey merely to have some new uniforms made, and that I did not see any reason why I should discard some good uniforms simply because their cut was different from that prescribed by the regulations, while everyone in the White army was wearing any kind of uniform obtainable and the old Imperial army regulations were not enforced in that respect. I wound up by pointing out that his own tunic was not of the regulation cut.

As the subaltern continued to revert to the topic I got angry and told him that as he seemed to be very punctilious about the observation of regulations he ought to know that a junior officer had no business to address remarks of that kind to an officer senior to him both in rank and in years of service, adding that I did not intend to listen any more to his nonsense.

I left the Cossack's compartment and thought no more about the incident; but at the next large station one of the temporary officers traveling in the same car with me said that he had noticed that the

Cossack subaltern went to speak to the Commandant of the station and that apparently he was stirring up some trouble for me. One of our traveling companions had overheard him say "... a spy in a British uniform with Russian shoulder straps posing as a Russian Naval Guards officer. . . ." He suggested that I had better speak to the British officer in charge of the escort to forestall any attempt to seize me and subject me to a mock court-martial by some of Semenov's henchmen.

At first I was inclined to treat the matter lightly, but the officer warned me that unless I placed myself under the protection of the escort the local commandant might go to very great lengths to be unpleasant to me, and that even a summary execution on the general grounds of suspicion of being a Red agent was not altogether excluded; so I took his advice and told the British officer about the warning. The latter suggested that I stay in his compartment while we were still in Semenov's territory.

A few minutes later the Commandant came to speak to the British officer. The latter went out on the platform and, returning after a few minutes' conversation, said that the Commandant wanted to have me arrested but that he had assured him that he knew me for a former British naval officer and would not permit my arrest, as he was satisfied as to the authenticity of my documents. And so the incident was closed, the Cossack officer leaving the train at that station.

To me this was the best possible object lesson of what Semenov's rule meant to the population. If an officer in uniform could be arrested on the word of a drunken subaltern, what kind of security had the civilian population from molestation by the military?

The incident made me very popular with the passengers of my car. Apparently the fact that Semenov's officers wanted to harm me was a sufficient introduction. My fellow passengers became much franker in their discussions with me and told me in detail of the situation in the neighborhood of Taishet, where Ataman Krasilnikov's column was operating against some peasant guerillas. On their way east some of the passengers saw bodies of the captured guerilla men swinging from telegraph poles along the railway tracks near Taishet, apparently as a grim warning to anyone attempting to tamper with the railway. They also told me that trains were derailed quite often in that vicinity and that sniping at passenger trains was a common occurrence. I passed this information on to the British officer in command of the escort. He accordingly took some precautions to guard

against a guerilla attack on the train, distributing his men in strategic positions throughout the train and supplementing his forces by Russian and foreign officers who had arms in their possession.

We had no trouble, and reached in safety the station used at that time by Krasilnikov for his headquarters. While approaching it we could hear in the distance the booming of field guns, and noticed carts carrying the wounded to the station.

Krasilnikov himself, a tall red-bearded Cossack, accompanied by a fantastically uniformed adjutant, was on the platform of the station receiving reports from his staff as to the progress of the action, which was going on between his column and the guerillas a few miles to the north. Krasilnikov's eyes were red and he looked as if he had already had a few drinks, despite the early hour of the morning.

A French officer was anxious to meet him. Upon shaking him by the hand ("*Un vrai cosaque, celui-là*"; to him apparently Krasilnikov was the typical Cossack, the bugaboo of the *Grand Armée* during its retreat from Moscow) he asked Krasilnikov if he would care for a glass of brandy and went to fetch a bottle from his car. Krasilnikov poured himself half a tumblerful of cognac, and tossed it off at one gulp to the delight of the Frenchman.

The red-capped troopers of Krasilnikov's column in their long brown-gray coats were making a great show at saluting, standing at attention and in general in trying to behave like a well-trained bunch of military cadets. They were all very young. To them civil war apparently meant something like a game of soldiers and robbers. However, their brave show failed to impress me, although some of the foreign officers on our train, for whose benefit probably a great deal of the performance was staged, did not fail to rise to the bait. As they told me later, they saw in these youths the rebirth of the Russian army and the restoration of military discipline.

To me Krasilnikov did not seem to be a real military leader. His public drinking, in front of his soldiers and the train passengers, impressed me as hardly compatible with strict discipline, and all this prancing around of his youngsters was a bit too showy to mean anything. However, his men were at least well dressed and shod.

When we reached Omsk, I left my impedimenta at the station and took a dilapidated *drozhki* to the Ministry of the Navy located on the main street of the city—the Atamanskaia. It was housed in a small white building where the Deputy Minister, Rear Admiral Kovalevskii, was holding sway in the absence of the Minister, M. I. Smirnov, Kol-

chak's former Chief of Staff in the Black Sea Fleet and my former colleague in the Sixth Destroyers Flotilla, where he commanded one of the ships.

Kovalevskii received me very cordially and introduced me to the head of the Personnel Department. I then asked him to arrange an interview with Kolchak, whom I wanted to see prior to going to Perm to join the Kama River Gunboat Flotilla, in which I was anxious to obtain a command.

In the meantime the head of the Naval Division of the General Headquarters Staff, a former Naval Guardsman, dropped in and took me over to his own office for a chat. It was very pleasant to see some familiar faces so far from the ports of the Baltic Sea.

The city was crowded beyond capacity. Refugees were living in dugout huts covered with branches and straw. It was impossible to obtain a room at a hotel, and Kovalevskii suggested that I use the officers' dormitory installed on the second floor of the Ministry Building.

The bare, none too tidy rooms, with rows of bunks in them, had very inadequate toilet and washing facilities and did not look too tempting to me. I had no choice, however, so took my bags to one of the empty bunks and registered with the officer in charge of the dormitory.

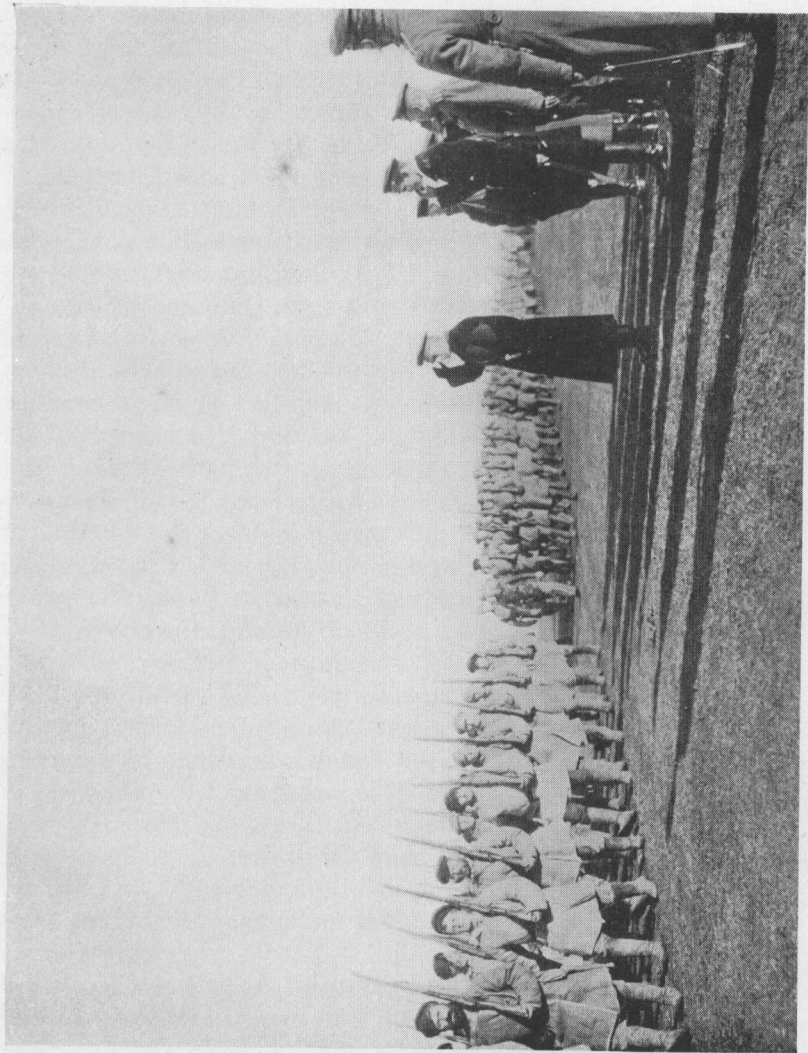
As I looked around I saw that I was the only naval officer among the group domiciled there. They were mostly temporary army officers assigned to duty either in the chancelleries of the Ministry or connected with the Naval Brigade.

In conversation with them I learned that practically all the naval officers that were at Omsk during the winter had left for Perm a few weeks before to help equip the gunboat flotilla in the process of formation there.

The next morning I was informed that the Supreme Ruler would see me at eleven.

The small white stucco house on the muddy Irtysh River was known in Omsk as the "Supreme Ruler's Palace." It was guarded by soldiers of Kolchak's personal bodyguard. Dressed in English khaki with broad purple shoulder straps edged with white piping, the sentries made a somewhat grotesque impression, as the British-cut uniforms did not suit the sturdy peasant frames of the soldiers. However, they were neat and well drilled.

In the waiting room, which was rather dingy and far from spotless, there were several personal aides of Kolchak among whom I recog-



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ADMIRAL KOLCHAK REVIEWING HIS TROOPS
near Tobolsk, Siberia

nized Lieutenant Sazonov of the navy talking to a couple of young Cossack officers. Sazonov greeted me very cordially, but urged me not to forget to call Kolchak "Your High Excellency," which struck me as rather absurd, and contrary to the Russian naval tradition, according to which callow youngsters addressed even the highest officers by their name and patronymic without any use of naval titles.

After a few minutes' wait I was admitted to Kolchak's study. He sat behind a wide desk with a few papers on it. The Admiral rose to greet me in a friendly manner.

Following Sazonov's suggestions I stood stiffly at attention and reported in the regulation formula my arrival at Omsk. Kolchak shook my hand warmly and motioned me to be seated. He began the conversation by asking me about my service in the British navy and of my impressions of France and England after the Armistice. He also questioned me about the situation at the Archangel front.

In the course of conversation I tried to impress upon Kolchak that the attitude of the Allies toward him must of necessity undergo a change because of the cessation of hostilities, the peace negotiations, and general war weariness, as well as the attitude of the laboring classes in Allied countries towards the Russian civil war.

Kolchak retorted rather petulantly that he had had assurances from the British and the French representatives which did not seem to confirm my pessimism; that on the contrary he had repeatedly been told that he could count on continued support on the part of their respective countries; that, as a matter of fact, the recognition of his Government as standing for Russia as a whole was within the realm of immediate possibility. I stuck to my guns and insisted that in all plans of military campaigns only local Siberian resources should be counted upon and that expectations of outside help should not be taken into consideration.

Kolchak was obviously displeased with my insistence and changed the conversation, asking in what field I should like to be employed in Siberia. I answered that I did not want any position involving political work and was anxious to serve at the front in my professional capacity of naval officer with the Kama Gunboat Flotilla. Kolchak remarked that I could go to Perm, the base of the flotilla, any time I wanted and that I should tell Admiral Smirnov, who was in command, that he authorized me to select any position in the flotilla to which I wanted to be appointed. Then he rose, signifying that our interview had come to an end.

The Supreme Ruler made a strange impression on me during that

hour. He seemed less highstrung than when I had seen him on the train from Sebastopol and in England on his way to America. There was, however, some sort of listlessness in his demeanor. He looked aged and different from the active, energetic man he was when I knew him in the navy in the old days. There was something fatalistic about him which I had never noticed before. He did not look to me a "man of destiny," but rather one thoroughly tired of groping and struggling in an unfamiliar environment.

On my way back to the Ministry I saw several companies of recruits drilling in the squares and in the streets. I stopped to watch them. They looked very much like the rookies of pre-revolutionary days, drilled reasonably well and seemed to be in good physical condition, well fed and clean. These peasant lads were to me a source of great wonder, for I could not accustom myself to the idea that it was possible again to mobilize Russian peasants for war—and a fratricidal war at that—within so few months after the collapse of the army that fought the World War, and keep them in the ranks of the army and under military discipline. On the whole, what I had seen so far of the armed forces of Siberia made me think that I was unduly pessimistic as to the outcome of the struggle and led me to revise my idea that there was no chance for the success of the Whites at all, even under adequate military leadership.

My friend Z. was already waiting for me with a car and we went over to the Army G.H.Q. Z. was full of optimism: according to him Samara would be taken within a few weeks, Kazan would fall within a month or so, and the junction with the Allied forces at Archangel was within sight. He took me over to see the General Staff officer in charge of the Department of Operations at the G.H.Q.—the *Stavka* as it was known at Omsk, in imitation of the G.H.Q. of the World War period.

The young officer in charge of that department asked me numerous questions about the Archangel front situation, pressing me to express an opinion on the advisability of the drive on Glazov and Kotlas to establish a junction with the Archangel forces. As I was not familiar with the terrain and had only a very vague notion of the available resources of the Siberian Army, I was not in a position to express an opinion on that, and merely remarked that the forces at the Archangel front at the time I left were not very important, aside from the British, American, and French contingents, and that in my opinion the only vital point about Archangel was the question of military supplies which could be more easily shipped to Siberia from that port

than from the Vladivostok route blocked by the insufficient transport facilities of the Trans-Siberian. I do not know whether that conversation had any subsequent bearing on the campaign of General Pepe-
liaev's Northern Group of the Siberian Army on Glazov. I hope that it had not, as that campaign was devoid of any military sense and served merely to thin out forces already scattered on a very wide front.

Omsk, with its broad dusty avenues, small wooden houses interlarded here and there with a few modern stone and brick buildings, was still deeply provincial in spite of its new dignity as the capital, not only of White Siberia but of the whole Russian White movement. True, its streets were full of generals and colonels; companies of military cadets marched smartly along its main street to the tune of martial songs and it published several newspapers. Nevertheless it was still very much of an overgrown steppe village, very much a parvenu among the many capitals of Russian factions of that day.

My attitude towards the White forces underwent a curious change as I left Omsk and was on my way to join the Kama Flotilla. I ceased to be an objective observer and became an interested party. During these few days in the capital of White Siberia invisible threads had been spun which were attaching me to the White side.

On the whole, what I saw there was better than I had expected. The average citizen seemed to be satisfied, while not particularly enthusiastic about the régime. Military affairs seemed to prosper at the front, and there appeared to be a chance, by all accounts I had heard at Omsk, of the spring offensive of the White armies reaching the Volga within a few weeks.

The cars of the train I traveled in were overfilled with passengers. There were officers returning to the front, government officials, soldiers, peasants, merchants—all in a hurry to get somewhere. There was a sufficiency of food, and at some of the larger stations one could get a plain but nourishing meal at a moderate price. One could see that an effort had been made to keep the station platforms clean, and the station buildings were well cared for. There was an air of permanence about the White occupation of Western Siberia. There were very few police to be seen, the passport control was superficial and easy-going, and the atmosphere of tenseness, mutual suspicion, and almost unconcealed brutality which I noticed in Transbaikalia seemed to be absent in the territory we passed between Omsk and Perm. The whole thing was more like Russia in pre-revolutionary days.

At Ekaterinburg, while eating at the station restaurant, I fell into a conversation with a well-to-do peasant who was sitting next to me. He was puzzled by the insignia on my uniform and inquired whether I was an army officer or a government official. Having answered his question, I asked about his home village. It turned out that he came from the Krasnoufinsk district where one of my schoolmates had a large estate. I asked the peasant whether he knew him.

"Certainly I know Mr. Golubtsov quite well. He is a neighbor of mine. In revolutionary times he became quite prominent in our district by organizing a peasant guerilla against the Bolsheviks. He is an officer now."

Upon further questioning, the peasant said he thought my friend was on the staff of General Gaida, that remarkable Czech adventurer who rose within a few years from the rank of subaltern to that of Lieutenant General and Commander of the Siberian Army.

My new acquaintance seemed quite willing to talk, and I discussed with him the attitude of the peasantry in his district toward the Civil War, and their political leanings.

"We certainly do not want to see the Reds back again in our village. When they were in power we could not call even a chicken our own. The drunkards and loafers of the village poor committees are the only ones inclined to favor them. We are glad Kolchak has driven them beyond the Kama River and we hope they never return."

The peasant seemed to be sincere. While he obviously was of the wealthy type, representing the upper half of the village, the difference in his attitude and that of the peasantry in the Krasnoiarsk-Taishet territory was striking. There peasants of his type were, if not frankly inimical to the régime, at least on their guard, and far from enthusiastic for the White cause.

This difference in attitude I ascribed to the fact that the Krasnoufinsk peasants had already experienced the Bolshevik rule in its full stringency, with food collections, recruiting, and taxation, and could therefore compare the White rule with that of the Reds. On the other hand, there were no atamans in their district. Without attempting to generalize from that conversation, I noted it as a very interesting phenomenon.

Perm, where the headquarters of the Kama River Gunboat Flotilla were located, looked rather desolate. There were only a few stores open and those displayed very few goods for sale. The commercial life of the city was apparently lagging and its streets were unkempt.

It was explained to me later that as Perm had been recaptured from

the Reds by the Siberian troops only a few months previously it had not had time to recuperate. Probably the proximity of the war zone was a factor in discouraging business enterprise.

The headquarters of the flotilla were located in a fairly large house near the Kama River. A white blue-crossed flag was fluttering merrily in the breeze and a sentry in the uniform of the Siberian Marines was guarding its entrance.

Commander Nicholas Fomin, Chief of Staff of the flotilla and a former senior staff officer of the Destroyers' Division of the Baltic Fleet, received me in his study and introduced me to several other staff officers, among whom I found some acquaintances, as they were nearly all Baltic Fleet officers. Admiral Smirnov, in command of the flotilla, sent for me and invited me to dine with him, saying that he would like to have a long talk with me.

Fomin was an energetic executive, and apparently all such things as uniforms, food, ammunition, and fuel were well in hand, as also the rebuilding and arming of gunboats, which were improvised from powerful river sidewheel tugs used on the Volga and the Kama to tow barges and rafts. The floating base of the flotilla was a large roomy passenger motorship which had ample accommodation for the numerous officers and clerks of its chancelleries.

After a brief general conversation, Fomin asked me what I wanted to do in the flotilla, and seemed displeased when I told him that I wanted to command one of the gunboats. He remarked that for the present all such commands were filled but that he would look into the matter and let me know later of the outcome.

In the meanwhile we were joined by Vadim Makarov. Vadim, as I learned later, had designed the mounts for the army three-inch field guns used on some of the gunboats. These mounts made it possible to convert fieldpieces into naval guns. This had a decided advantage, in view of the large supply of field guns and practically unlimited ammunition available for them in the army stores. Makarov's mounts proved very successful. I believe the Reds used them later for their armored trains, having captured some of them during our retreat from Perm.

Vadim took me to lunch at the home of his division Commanding Officer, where I met Lieutenant George Meyrer, the Flag Lieutenant of their division. Meyrer impressed me from the first as a man of limitless energy and driving power. He was then a very young man, belonging to the class of the Naval College which graduated in 1917. In 1918 he had organized the Volga Gunboat Flotilla of the Whites, and

many naval officers senior to him in rank had served under his orders during the successful operations of the flotilla in that year. Meyrer was essentially that same type of born leader that provided the recruits for the generalships in the Red army—such people as Tukhachevskii and Bluecher, for instance. However, the Whites did not know how to utilize his remarkable talents and, instead of giving full scope to his activities, they gradually reduced him to the position of Flag Lieutenant of one of the divisions of the flotilla he created in 1918. He later made his mark in America as manager of large aviation works, and now wears the stripes of a Lieutenant Commander in the U. S. Naval Reserve.

FIGHTING ON THE KAMA

EVEN a most superficial acquaintance with the personnel of the flotilla enabled me to see that there were two groups of officers in it. One consisted of those who fought on board its ships since its inception in 1918, and included a few young naval officers, a number of army artillery officers who had charge of the fieldpieces that formed at that time the armament of the gunboats, and several river pilots and captains, who were given rank in the naval reserve or the marines, known as Naval Rifles in Siberia. The other group included naval officers who had come to Siberia with Kolchak or had drifted in later from America, and some who had made their way from European Russia through the lines of the Reds. They were, as a rule, more experienced and mature, but so far had not seen any fighting on rivers during the Civil War. These officers filled largely technical and staff positions. Among them were my friend Nicholas Hesse, a Lieutenant Commander in the Naval Guards, who became Flag Gunner of one of the divisions; Vadim Makarov, who was filling a similar position in the other division; Igor, who served as a liaison officer with the Siberian Army; and Hans Berg, who was the Flag Engineer of a division.

There was a certain cleavage between the two groups and I could observe immediately an undercurrent of feeling between them, although individually there were friendships that crossed these imaginary boundaries.

The great issue facing the flotilla was that the ice on the river was breaking up and, with a few exceptions, the ships were not yet ready. The long-range naval guns lacked ammunition, and the brunt of future battles had to be borne by gunboats armed with the comparatively short-range fieldpieces on Makarov's mountings. As the enemy was known to possess several ships armed with naval four-inch guns, which vastly surpassed in accuracy and range the army fieldpieces, the prospects for the White flotilla were none too rosy.

The lower personnel of the flotilla was a mixed one. Some ships were largely manned by urban middle-class and peasant volunteers who joined the flotilla in 1918 and were augmented by additional volunteers recruited in 1919. On some ships only the radio operators were old naval ratings called into service by Kolchak. There were college students as well as a number of high school students, with some midshipmen from the Vladivostok Naval College, also a large number of young temporary army officers among these crews. The army officers served largely as machine gunners and sometimes as artillery men. Other gunboats, however, were manned by former bluejackets of the Baltic Fleet who were mobilized by order of the Omsk Government. The wisdom of recalling for active service "the pride and glory" of the Revolution seemed to me from the first very questionable. What I heard later about incipient mutinies among those bluejackets at the Perm Naval Depot seemed to justify my doubts.

Two ships, the gunboat *Kent* and the armed barge *Suffolk*, were manned by Britishers and flew the St. George's ensign. There was a British Naval Mission at Perm with Captain Wolfe-Murray, R.N., at its head. The two British ships, however, did not constitute a separate unit, but were incorporated into the Russian flotilla. At times Admiral Smirnov had his flag on the *Kent*. This, I believe, is the first and only instance of a Russian admiral flying his flag at the topmast of a British man-of-war.

On my way back to the flotilla headquarters I was nearly knocked down by a giant peasant in a heavy sheepskin coat. The fellow hurled himself headlong at me and hugged me like a bear. At first I was quite nonplussed—thought the man was drunk or had suddenly gone out of his mind—but in a second I recognized the face of Avdeev, a former Naval Guards quartermaster. His regular, finely chiseled features, like those on an old ikon, were framed in a bushy beard which at first prevented my recognizing him. Avdeev had served with me on board the *Rossiiia* in the Executive Petty Officers' School. I had taught that peasant from the Upper Kama how to handle a boat at sea, how to use the compass and tie a knot in a shipshape fashion, and had imparted to him some elementary notions of geography, history, and naval regulations.

Avdeev was obviously delighted to see me. He told me that he had come to report for service in the flotilla and would like to be with me. I took him over to the personnel officer and arranged for Avdeev's assignment to the position of sergeant major of the Headquarters Company.

This encounter gave me a great deal of satisfaction, proving that there still were Baltic Fleet bluejackets who were glad to see their former officers and apparently none too favorably inclined towards the Reds.

In the evening, while dining with Admiral Smirnov, I rehearsed for his benefit my conversation with Kolchak and gave him a frank sketch of my impressions of the trip through Siberia. During the conversation Smirnov told me that the workers at the Motovilikha Plant, who were rebuilding and arming the ships of the flotilla, were doing their jobs well and even with a certain measure of enthusiasm. While these men were not as ardently anti-Bolshevik as the workers of the Izhevskii and Votkinskii plants, who had formed themselves into a real workingmen's army against the Reds and fought the Soviet levies to a standstill in 1918, they were nevertheless far from pro-Soviet. This was a tremendous surprise to me, as I thought, judging by my Archangel experience, that the industrial workers would actively favor the Bolshevik cause. Apparently, in the case of these workers in the industrial enterprises along the Kama, actual experience of Soviet rule had had a definite sobering effect.

Turning to my future duties in the flotilla, Smirnov remarked that there were no gunboat commands available according to the information submitted by Fomin. He suggested that I accept a staff position. This astonished me since I knew that there were several gunboats commanded by officers junior to me who had no actual experience in river warfare while I had had the benefit of the campaign on the North Dvina with the British navy the year before. Particularly as Admiral Kolchak himself had told me I could choose any post on the flotilla I wanted, this obvious desire to shunt me from combat command was a surprise.

However, I controlled myself, merely remarking that if the flotilla did not need my services and experience as a ship's captain, I might offer them to the British, who had only marine officers on their ships and might give me the command of one of them. As long as they were part and parcel of the same flotilla, it really made no difference whether I resumed my rank in the British naval forces or continued in the Russian.

The next morning Smirnov sent for me and said he had decided to form a combat staff separate from the regular headquarters and the flotilla, and asked me to accept the position of its chief. This would take me right into the midst of the combat activities of the flotilla, as Fomin would stay at Perm or on board the floating base, while I

should accompany Smirnov on board the gunboats and should act as his immediate assistant in action. In addition to this, Smirnov wanted me to take over the duties of the chief of the Foreign Department of the Ministry of the Navy and accept the supervision of the Central Naval Intelligence Division as well as the intelligence work of the flotilla.

In Siberia some of the most important central intelligence work, such as information coming from Constantine Nabokov in London, from the unofficial representatives in the zones of other White armies, and some of the activities connected with the relations with anti-Bolshevik organizations in Soviet Russia, were in the hands of the navy. In other words, the position offered me carried with it the direction of all these activities within the limitations of the scope of Omsk and its isolation from the centers of information.

While I still preferred the command of a gunboat I was interested enough by the offer to accept it and was soon engrossed in the files pertaining to my new work.

It would be out of place to give here an outline of the activities of the flotilla during that campaign on the Kama. There were, however, two episodes in it which stand out in my reminiscences and which, I hope, may give an idea of the nature and scope of it.

When the Siberian Army, upon reaching the line of the Viatka River on its southern front, began to roll back, energetically pushed by the Reds, it fell to the lot of the flotilla to transship the units of the Southern Group to the left bank of the Kama. Smirnov was personally supervising these operations, having his flag on one of the gunboats.

As the flotilla was engaged in carrying the regiments of the Fifteenth Division, we were advised by Captain Burov, its Chief of Staff, that one of these regiments was to remain on the right bank of the Kama River to form a bridgehead. As the river was there almost a mile wide and prospects for a counter-attack by the White forces were rather remote in that sector of the front, the reasons for leaving the regiment behind were not clear to me at all. As the advancing enemy forces were estimated to be about the strength of an army corps, it was obvious that the weak regiment, which was only about five hundred men strong, could not offer any effective resistance to the enemy, particularly as the positions it occupied were not by any means strong. The way things looked, the regiment left on the right bank would be massacred by the enemy for no military reason whatsoever that could bear any rational inquiry.

Admiral Smirnov was aware of this and spoke to me about it. We both came to the conclusion that the regiment should be removed to the left bank. Smirnov enjoyed the rights and privileges of a general commanding an army. In other words, he was in a position to issue orders to supersede those signed by Burov in the name of the General in Command of the Fifteenth Division. Smirnov instructed me to order the Colonel commanding the regiment to embark with his men on board the ships of the flotilla.

Within the next fifteen minutes I located the Colonel of that regiment. He was a grizzled old veteran of the World War, a Knight of the Order of St. George, the highest Russian military decoration under the Empire, and a proud possessor of a golden sword given him for conspicuous gallantry in action. I found him in a peasant *izba* calmly sipping his tea, while issuing orders to his Adjutant for the defense of the positions assigned him.

"Sir," I addressed him, "do you understand the reasons behind your instructions to remain on the right bank of the Kama and to form a bridgehead?"

"No, Lieutenant, I do not, but it is not the first time in my military career that I fail to understand what prompted my superiors to give certain orders. I merely carry them out to the best of my ability."

"Do you expect to be able to withstand the onslaught of enemy forces which I hear are about equal to an army corps?"

The Colonel set down his glass, lighted a cigarette and looked sarcastically at me.

"Young man, even Suvorov, great military genius that he was, couldn't have done it. As you know, I have about five hundred men. Very likely the enemy can concentrate against me about twenty thousand men with some field artillery. No, I don't see any chance of holding the bridgehead."

"What do you intend to do?"

"I shall carry out my orders and defend the so-called bridgehead (though I don't really see one), to the best of my ability."

"And how long do you expect to be able to hold out against the enemy?"

"Matter of luck. Perhaps a day, possibly two."

"And what then?"

The Colonel threw his cigarette away and looked me squarely in the eyes.

"As you are also wearing the uniform, the question is superfluous."

Then I sprang my surprise on the Colonel: "I have orders for

you to embark with your regiment in the ships of the flotilla and to proceed to the left bank of the Kama."

There was a brief silence. Then, lighting himself another cigarette the Colonel asked: "And who issued these orders, may I ask?"

"Admiral Smirnov, commanding the flotilla. He enjoys the privileges of a general commanding an army, and his orders supersede those issued by your divisional general."

The Colonel's stern face relaxed somewhat. He asked me, however, to produce documents to show that Smirnov was clothed with such rights. As I expected a question of that nature, I was able to produce from my pocket a printed copy of Kolchak's order commissioning Smirnov.

The enemy scouts were already within rifle shot from the advance positions of the regiment. There was no time to be lost, as it would be much more difficult to extricate and embark the men after the action began.

The Colonel immediately sent word to the C.O. battalions and went out himself to supervise the replacement of the companies in the line by men of the reserve. I accompanied him to the trenches.

The soldiers were dressed very badly, some were literally in rags. Only a few had boots, the majority were wearing bast shoes or had sacking wrapped around their feet. Some of them had bags sewn together in lieu of uniforms. The officers were also uniformed in tattered and washed-out khaki. I noted, however, that the machine guns and rifles were clean and well polished and that both officers and men seemed alert and businesslike. They impressed me as veteran fighters who would give a good account of themselves in action.

The Colonel watched his men marching to embarkation and remarked: "We had three thousand men at the beginning of the winter. It is this constant fighting and marching, frostbites in the winter and typhus at all seasons, that have thinned out our ranks. We have had hardly any deserters. At the same time we can't get any reinforcements. The authorities prefer to give recruits to these so-called shock regiments rather than to fighting divisions like ours."

Noting my surprise at the lack of leather footwear and the ragged clothing of his men, he added: "Uniforms and boots also seem to go to these new regiments although they have done nothing as yet to prove their mettle. We haven't had any uniforms since the regiment was formed, and even then we didn't get much."

In about half an hour's time the embarkation was completed and the covering parties ran up the gangplank at a dogtrot.

As we conveyed these men to the other bank of the Kama, I made a mental mark against Burov and recalled that he was the man who, aboard one of the gunboats, had shot the C.O. of a 4.2" battery who refused to fire his guns from an open position. It did not surprise me to learn that Burov became later the Chief of Staff of the Army of the Far Eastern Republic, a buffer state created by the Bolsheviks.

A few days later Admiral Smirnov and I went to Sarapul, where the Admiral had to attend a conference of corps commanders of the Siberian Army. We left the flotilla some fifty miles below Sarapul and proceeded in an unarmed river inspection service steamer to Sarapul.

As soon as we arrived there it became clear to us that the army was not only in full retreat but on the verge of a rout and that the enemy were closing in very rapidly on Sarapul and in a few hours would be in a position to cut off the flotilla from its line of retreat upstream.

This was disturbing news indeed, particularly as all the information we had from army headquarters heretofore had been of an optimistic nature and did not at all imply the possibility of the abandonment of Sarapul. There was no time to spare and, leaving two gunboats to guard the remaining spans of the blown-up railway bridge across the Kama and to cover the transportation of the troops to the left bank, we started immediately at full speed downstream to rejoin the flotilla.

It was a beautiful summer evening—the verdant picturesque shores of the Kama were at their best. Smirnov and I were sitting in the glass-enclosed deck house drinking tea and watching the landscape gliding past us.

Suddenly I became aware of a double flash on a hill a couple of miles inshore of the right bank. My experience in river warfare told me that a two-gun battery had opened fire on us. I so informed Smirnov.

"Oh, you must be mistaken. The enemy haven't had time to reach the river, even allowing for the extreme optimism of the army information."

Before he finished his sentence a shell hit the after part of the steamer, exploding with a loud detonation.

Smirnov did not bat an eye.

"One lump of sugar, or two?" he asked by way of commentary.

By this time a second shell had disabled our wireless. Smirnov's

servant rushed in with life belts, shouting loudly: "We are doomed. Save yourself! Here are some life belts."

Smirnov kicked the life belts under the table and told the man to go to the devil and let us alone.

Fortunately there was a bend in the river, and apparently some trees hid us from view, as shells began to fall wide of the mark.

As there was no point in carrying on with this brave show of drinking tea, I suggested to Smirnov that we go to the wheelhouse and see to our two machine guns being mounted on the bridge and take over the supervision of the steering of the steamer in case we ran into another ambushed battery.

Through a remarkable piece of luck for us, the enemy succeeded in bringing up only two guns for an attack on the river shipping. As we turned the bend their fire became ineffective because of the distance, and we safely escaped downstream and joined the flotilla.

Within a few hours the gunboat divisions, as well as the auxiliary ships, were ready and the flotilla proceeded upstream, in columns of the divisions. The British gunboat *Kent* was leading, while Admiral Smirnov flew his flag on the gunboat second in line.

In the quiet of the night, the splashing of the paddles of our ships could be heard for miles, thus giving the enemy ample warning of our approach while, of course, we had no way of knowing where they had placed their batteries to attack us. The gun crews were at their posts, while the officers and signalmen on the bridges were anxiously scanning the shores for signs of enemy activity.

The low-slung gunboats with their square armored wheelhouses and squat gun barbets, their masts lowered, looked very businesslike in the dusk of the early morning. Their dark broad shapes glided over the black surface of the river like a flock of ungainly waterfowl homing for their nests after a night of feeding in the fields.

As dawn began to break we heard the noise of a propeller and sighted a small launch running downstream towards us. We signaled her to stop, and her occupants told us that the army had already crossed to the left bank of the Kama and that Sarapul was occupied by the Red army in force. We also learned that the remaining spans of the bridge were intact and that both gunboats were still guarding them. This news cheered us up considerably. As long as the channel was not blocked by the bridge-spans our chance for escape held good.

A few miles downstream from Sarapul an enemy battery opened fire on us. The First Division's guns, under the direction of Makarov,

silenced it fairly quickly before it was able to do us any damage. The flotilla passed its position without sustaining any losses.

A few minutes later the First Division opened fire again. As the enemy were not firing it was impossible for us in the flagship to make out what was the object of their fire. Hesse, who was the senior of the artillery officers of the flotilla taking part in the engagement, asked me to signal them to stop firing, which I did. Later I learned that the First Division had spotted another enemy battery getting into position and were firing at it while the enemy were yet unready to reply. That battery opened fire again and inflicted considerable damage on the ships in the rear of our columns.

By the time we approached the bridge it was already quite light. I had not slept for about fifty hours and felt exceedingly drowsy. The toxins produced by lack of sleep had slowed down all my mental reactions. My only thought was, "When shall I be able to sleep again?"

We filed under the bridge following the navigable channel and soon saw the two gunboats that were left to guard the bridge, who signalled to us that all was well.

To my amazement the enemy batteries kept silent while the vanguard of the flotilla was passing under the spans of the bridge. Almost the entire Second Division, which was in the van, passed the bridge before they opened fire. Then things began to happen very rapidly. Several field batteries opened fire at once, a number of machine guns adding their staccato to the booming of the field rifles. We could see men in the fire-station tower, where a red flag was hoisted, taking distances and signaling. Later we discovered a machine-gun nest right under the gate of a small house on the hill above the river.

By that time the ships of the flotilla were moving through a lane of tall feathery waterspouts raised by enemy shells, firing their own guns at the enemy batteries, at the observation post on top of the belfry and at the fire station, as well as at the machine-gun nest. The lyddite shells of the *Kent* soon set afire the wooden house behind the machine-gun nest and silenced it.

Suddenly we saw an enemy field battery standing in one of the city squares getting ready to fire on us at close range through one of the streets that ran down to the river. We pumped into her all the guns we could bring to bear and dispersed the men serving her before they had a chance to open fire. They ran, unable to stand the hail of shrapnel and high explosive shells we directed at them.

The fire-station tower crashed, bringing down the red flag. Our gun crews cheered lustily.

In the meanwhile the auxiliary ships were passing our column in our lee. Several of them were repeatedly hit by enemy shells. However, they all managed to steam upstream out of the range of the Red artillery. Some of the gunboats were also hit. However, considering the volume of fire directed at them by the enemy and the close range of the batteries of the Reds it was remarkable that so very few of the missiles found their large and slowly moving targets. I was certain that a naval battery manned by experienced gunners could have scored at least ten times the number of hits inflicted by the Red artillery.

From my vantage point atop the armored wheelhouse of the flagship I could see that our gunboats were apparently suffering very little damage from that withering fire of the enemy. Hesse stood right below and berated me for not doing a better job of spotting for him. I could hardly hear his voice in the din raised by the salvoes of our guns, the explosions of enemy shells near our ship, the rattle of our machine guns, and the clang of the enemy's machine-gun bullets against the armor plates and the hull of the ship. There was something tremendously exciting in that cacophony of explosions, shots and bullets hammering on the anvil of steel plate. My drowsiness began to disappear and with delight I watched Hesse directing the guns of the gunboat with the composure of a fire-control instructor in the roadstead of Reval in pre-war times.

Hesse was apparently enjoying himself hugely. His nostrils were dilated, he grinned broadly as each successful salvo found its mark. It was obviously one of the red-letter days of his life. I had never before seen a man so completely attuned to the symphony of battle, and I envied him as I could not share his elation. At best, it was to me a professional matter, to be dealt with as efficiently as possible. For me the Valkyries were not riding over Sarapul as they apparently were in honor of the old Teutonic strain of Hesse.*

When we had already passed the city, one of the signalmen brought to my attention the position of the last ship of our line, the *Statnyi*. I saw through my field glasses that something was very wrong with that gunboat. She was emitting clouds of steam and then dropped her anchor, apparently having lost steering way and trying not to

* Hesse subsequently committed suicide at Omsk in the fall of the same year. The strain of the Civil War broke the thread of his sanity and he shot himself during an attack of melancholia.

be carried downstream by the current. The enemy concentrated fire on her. She was obviously in a bad plight. Smirnov had also seen what was going on and immediately ordered his flagship to turn, signaling to the flagship of the First Division to stand by the *Statnyi* and the rest of its ships to cover the maneuver by their fire.

As we began to move downstream the enemy apparently understood our maneuver as an intention to land troops in order to recover Sarapul and to capture his batteries. Anyhow the enemy fire stopped almost completely.

Meanwhile the crew of the *Statnyi* continued to blaze at the enemy with their guns, the men standing already ankle-deep in water. That ship was manned by the mobilized bluejackets of the Baltic Fleet. Her men lived up to the reputation of the old Imperial navy, sticking to their guns in spite of the impending dissolution of their ship.

As her position was hopeless, her boiler being damaged by an enemy shell and the hull pierced in several places, the ships of the First Division took over the officers and men of the *Statnyi*, the breech blocks of her guns, her machine guns, signal books and documents, and informed us that they were ready to proceed. Then we also turned upstream and soon left Sarapul behind us. Our fire had inflicted a great deal of damage to the buildings on the river front, and we were sorry that the action had taken place in a spot where our every shell was bound to hit some building.

The *Statnyi* was our only loss. This was nothing short of miraculous, as we had run the gauntlet of enemy batteries for miles in broad daylight. In some places the navigable channel came quite close to the shore occupied by the enemy.

The British marines in the *Kent* counted the number of the enemy shells that had passed overhead during the action, and reported some four hundred odd, if I remember correctly. The total expenditure of ammunition by the enemy must have been tremendous.

To me that action at Sarapul has always had a touch of the incongruous, when I think of these Baltic Fleet bluejackets of the *Statnyi* desperately firing the guns of their sinking ship against the soldiers of the Red army. It was like a forerunner of the great Kronstadt Rebellion of 1921, when the Red army quashed the brave resistance of the crews of the Baltic Fleet ships and dispersed the "Pride and Glory of the Revolution."

During the entire Kama campaign there was only one important action between our flotilla and the ships of the Reds. We were vic-

torious, but no strategic advantages were reaped from that tactical victory. It was not unlike the Battle of Jutland from the German viewpoint: we had to continue our retreat, following the army. Both Hesse and Makarov greatly distinguished themselves in that encounter with the Red flotilla.

However, as the army continued its rapid retreat, the rôle of the flotilla was more and more reduced to rendering artillery support to various army units, the mining of the river to impede the activities of the Red flotilla in its effort to help the Red army, and the ferrying of the land forces from the right shore to the left. When Perm had to be abandoned, the existence of the flotilla came to an end. Guns and armor plate were removed from the ships and loaded on railway trucks. The great effort of building up the flotilla was completely wasted. We saved the guns and the men, but without the ships their potential fighting value was small.

A few days before the dismantling of the ships there was a plan afoot among the officers of the flotilla to make an attempt to break through the enemy lines, to attack the enemy flotilla and, in case of success, to steam down the Kama into the Volga to join General Wrangel's forces near Tsaritsin.

Meyrer was wholeheartedly for that project. It was obvious that Smirnov's place during the impending crucial months was at the side of Kolchak. I suggested, therefore, that the command of the flotilla should pass to Fomin or one of the division commanders, and offered myself as the chief of staff for the gunboats that should be selected to make the attempt to break through.

This proposal was not approved. The Commanding Officers of the divisions did not receive it with any enthusiasm. Only one of them, Tikhmenev, agreed to it. Still, I could never understand why the attempt was not made. It was clear even then that the guns and the men taken off the ships would not be of great use to White Siberia, and should only a few gunboats succeed in breaking through they would prove a great help to General Wrangel, who had no river forces comparable to those of the Kama Flotilla. There was, of course, the question of shortage of ammunition for the 130 mm. guns that were used to rearm our best ships. It was suggested at the time that without the effective use of these guns there was no hope of us blazing our way through the enemy flotilla. Personally I still think it would have been worth while to make the attempt.

The ships of the flotilla, or at least most of them, ended on a Viking's pyre. This was entirely unpremeditated and came about

through an accident. Orders were given to empty the large oil cisterns in the vicinity of the spot where the ships lay at anchor or were moored. The river was thus covered with floating oil. Somehow the layer of oil caught fire and burned fiercely, destroying all shipping.

Smirnov was greatly distressed by this as he always drew a sharp line between a military necessity and a wanton destruction of national property. He regarded the Kama shipping as an important national asset and was grieved to see that through some fatal carelessness, or perhaps at the whim of some pyromaniac, so many valuable ships were destroyed during our evacuation of Perm.

Thus the Kama Flotilla came to an end. We clambered into railway cars and slowly trailed through the beautiful wooded glens, along picturesque mountain lakes and streams, across the Urals into Siberia.

The White army was rapidly streaming back. It was to make its last great stand at Cheliabinsk before retreating into the plains of Siberia. All hope of an immediate and decisive victory over the Reds was gone. However, most of us did not regard our defeat as final, and expected that our chance to strike back would come later, perhaps on the Tobol line.

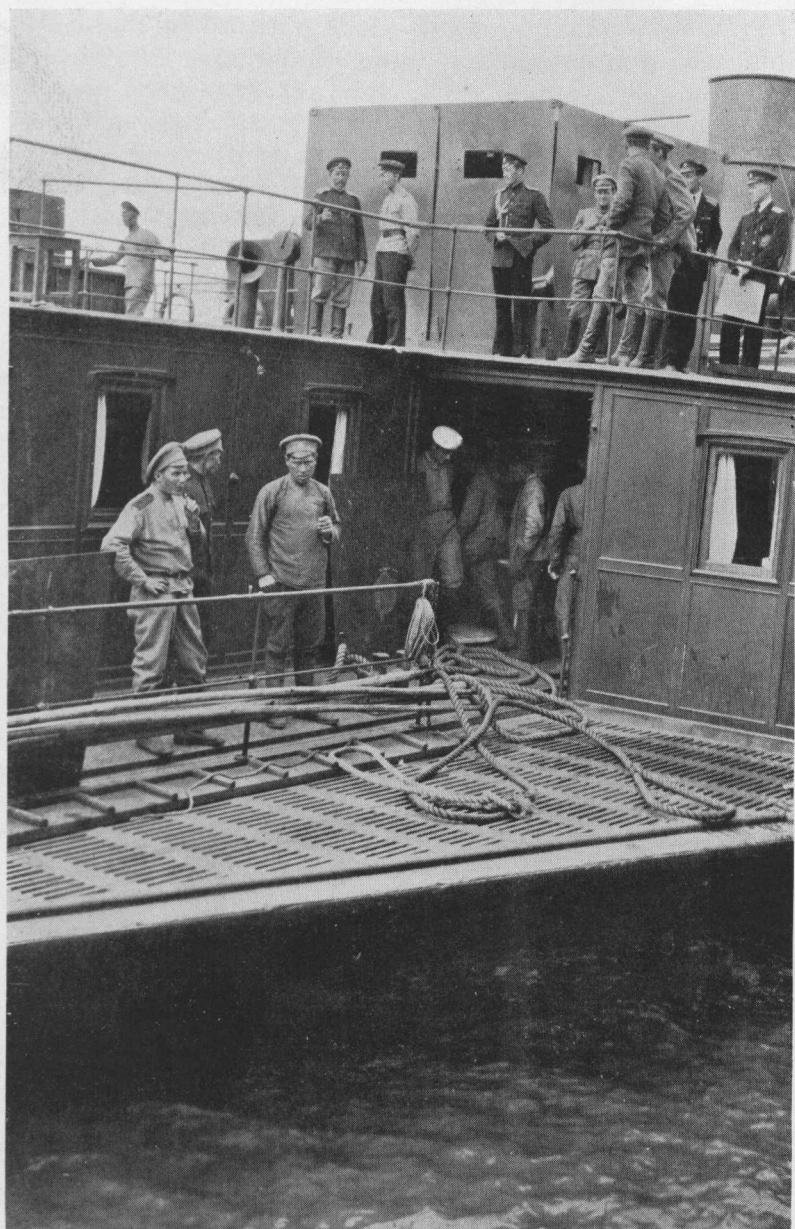
RIVER RAID

AFTER the abandoning of the Kama Flotilla and its subsequent destruction, I went to Omsk and for several weeks acted as the temporary head of the Operation Department of the Ministry of the Navy. Quite soon I found that my views on the utilization of the officers and men at the disposal of the Ministry were not in line with those of the Minister, Admiral Smirnov, with whom I had served on the Kama River. As several naval officers considerably senior to me both in years and experience had in the meantime arrived at Omsk, I handed over to them my duties at the Ministry, and joined a division of gunboats formed on the Irtysh River, for the defense of Omsk against the advancing forces of the Red army commanded by General Bluecher.

Thus in the autumn of 1919 I was in command of the river gunboat *Katun* in the Irtysh Flotilla. My friend Vadim Makarov flew his long pennant of flotilla leader on the mainmast of my ship.

The *Katun* was a clumsy symbol of the Allied Intervention in Russia. Her bow guns were British eighteen pounders and her main armament consisted of a Japanese 130-millimeter naval gun. Half of her machine guns were heavy French St. Etiennes. The rest hailed from America, and Colt stood sponsor for them. Originally the gunboat was a river-survey and inspection-service steamer. The guns were mounted on timber platforms cunningly shored up by the young naval constructor at Omsk. The bridge house, as well as the guns, were protected by thin armorplate against machine-gun fire and sniping. Her skipper and the rest of her civilian crew were still on board, performing an ambiguous service—neither combatants nor entirely civilians, as they were under a certain amount of naval discipline. The gun crews, the machine gunners, the signal men and other naval ratings were men from the Kama Flotilla.

The affairs of the White troops on the Irtysh were far from prosperous. The units of the White army had been driven like



ON BOARD THE GUNBOAT *KATUN*
Showing D. Fedotoff White at extreme upper right

chaff before the battalions of the divisions commanded by Galen-Bluecher, who later made his name in China and now commands the Soviet Forces in the Far East.

The *Katun* and another, weaker gunboat, the *Zaisan*, were steaming slowly up the Irtysh from Tobolsk, covering the retreat of the Fifteenth Division of Kolchak's army, commanded by Colonel Iuriev, one of the most picturesque characters in the White army of Siberia. The movement of the division was more like the migration of some nomadic tribe to fresh pastures than a maneuver of a regular army unit, so encumbered was the fighting force by a tremendous train of women and children. The troops were in low spirits. They had behind them a long trek from the Kama across the Ural Mountains. The large trading village of Ust-Ishim was their immediate goal.

Vadim and I were rather fond of Iuriev, who commanded the troops. He often came on board and never refused to share a glass—or more—of vodka with us before dinner. Iuriev was a great talker, and his yarns about the early stages of the Civil War were fascinating. His hatred of the Reds knew no bounds. They were to him devils incarnate, and he was not anxious to take any prisoners, barring those required by the intelligence branch of his staff.

Upon anchoring at Ust-Ishim, we sent word to Iuriev to come on board and sample some new-fangled eggnog which I had manufactured out of vodka, cocoa, and the yolks of a dozen eggs. The invitation was delivered by the ship's clerk when he went to fetch our mail and telegrams at the village post-office.

Iuriev came over quite promptly and eggnog had gone the round, and we were teasing him that his fate was to be captured by the Reds and flayed alive, when our mail was brought in. A long telegram from the Navy Department at Omsk looked bulky and important. Apologizing to Iuriev for attending to shop at cocktail time, I opened the message and ran quickly through it. As I put it into my pocket and reached for a glass of eggnog, both Vadim and Iuriev sensed that something was amiss.

Iuriev soon took his leave, as he had to attend to his dispositions for the following day. As soon as he had left I pulled out the telegram and read it to Vadim.

I now no longer recall the exact wording of the message, but the impression it made on me is as fresh in mind as though it had happened yesterday. The Naval Battalion of Kolchak's army had been badly mauled by the Reds at the front. The Ufa Rifles had

left the marines in the lurch. The commanding officer, the tow-haired giant Tikhmenev, had been killed in a hand-to-hand encounter, and most of the other company commanders were either killed or wounded. "Naval Battalion practically extinct," were the concluding words of the wire.

Our best friends, our classmates of the Naval College of St. Petersburg, were dead! Our dearest chums wiped out at one fell swoop! They had perished—not on board their ship, as behooves seamen, but in a small, obscure Siberian village, deserted by the Ufa Rifles in their hour of need, fighting at odds of one to ten.

We sat side by side on the Wardroom settee and reread the telegram as if hoping we had misread it. But it was still the same telegram. A couple of stiff drinks of vodka also made no difference. We tried a few more, but found that we continued to be quite sober. I suggested a walk on deck. We paced the narrow quarter-deck for a while, unable to bring ourselves to talk about the news. After about an hour of silent trudging, Vadim suddenly came back to life.

"Did you see that old fat scow with firewood some thirty miles down the river?" he inquired, casually.

This sounded quite cuckoo to me, but I confirmed the existence of the scow.

"How about going tonight and bringing her here? We could make a present of her to the city of Omsk. They are likely to be short of firewood there by now. And it would cheer the army no end to see that we can foray in the rear of the enemy."

It began to dawn on me what Vadim's idea was.

We signaled the Captain of the *Zaisan* to come on board for instructions, and I sent a small chit to Iuriev, telling him that we were about to make a raid through the enemy lines to find out what they were doing about bringing up their train and artillery.

It was still quite light when we weighed anchor and steamed downstream at the best speed we could muster—about twelve knots. The sun was setting behind the sparse oaktrees on the steep left bank. It was the calmest, most peaceful sunset I can remember that year. The mighty Irtysh was glassy, and shone like burnished silver.

"Battle quarters" were sounded as soon as we left Ust-Ishim. My personal bodyguard and machine gunner, Krivolapov, a powerfully molded Kama *kulak* with an inborn talent for hitting the bull's eye every time, posted himself on the bridge with a Lewis gun and a few spare drums. His keen, narrow-slit gray eyes were scanning the

underbrush of the steep shore for an ambush. As we doubled round an elbow where the fairwater ran close inshore, both Krivolapov and I suddenly spied a Red cavalryman. Sitting his horse on an open stretch of shore and looking at us composedly, shielding his eyes with the palm of his hand, *muzhik* fashion, he suggested a picture of Ilia Muromets, the great peasant knight of the Russian epos. The peaked helmet, shaped after the *shishak* of the Russian warriors of the Variag days, the heavy peasant body, the huge, rawboned horse, formed a quaint silhouette against the setting sun. To our surprise, he made no attempt to flee but continued to stare at us without batting an eye.

"Pick the bird off," I snapped to Krivolapov, who had his Lewis gun propped against the rail of the bridge. The dry rattle of the automatic rifle drew a formidable echo from the cliffs of the shore. A flock of wild geese took wing right under the prow of the *Katun* and quickly disappeared in the gathering dusk.

Krivolapov's aim was accurate, as usual. The red soldier threw up his hands and fell headlong into the stream. The horse neighed loudly and shrilly in its headlong flight into the woods.

"That's the limit," burst out Vadim, "cold-blooded murder. Why didn't you signal him to surrender?"

"You talk as though I had killed cock-robin," said I in disgust, and walked over to the other side of the bridge.

In about ten minutes we had run into a squadron of Red cavalry trotting in double file along the road that ran close to the shore.

I ordered shrapnel. The bow eighteen-pounders crashed a salvo, speeding their shells into the deep orange of the fading sunset. The long-barreled St. Etiennes on the wings of the bridge added their shrill note as the enemy cavalry flew helter-skelter for the nearest copse. It was already too dark to see if our fire had had any effect.

"We'll have a nice hornets' nest about our ears within fifteen minutes or so," remarked Vadim. "Wait till we come up against some infantry or artillery."

We were both considerably nonplussed, however, as our progress downstream continued in an entirely uneventful manner. If there were any Red troops in the Tatar villages strung out along the banks, they declined to make the fact known to us. Our ships were now moving in almost complete darkness. Only the practised eye of the pilots could tell definitely where we were, as the paddle-wheels of the gunboats churned up the river, making a noise which sounded to us very loud and telltale. And so we steamed down

the ink-black Irtysh, noting, as we glided past, the shadowy outlines of the sacred groves of nearby Tatar villages and the slender belfries of Russian settlements.

The bargees had a small fire burning on the deck of the scow, which was a considerable help in locating her. Vadim bellowed orders through his megaphone to the *Zaisan* to take her in tow. The *Katun* went alongside, and cross towlines were passed by my men, who eagerly boarded her.

The bargees were in a blue funk. Their Captain came to speak to me.

"You'll never get out of this alive. A whole brigade of Red infantry marched past here yesterday, two battalions on the right bank and the rest on the left. There are quite a few infantry and some artillery in the next village, two miles upstream. They're Bluecher's people and swore they'd capture Omsk before the leaves are off the trees."

I tried to make small talk with the Captain, but felt somewhat uneasy myself over the situation. The uncanny silence of the enemy began to oppress me.

The men worked briskly, fastening the towlines. They were silent, and obviously intent on making as little noise as possible. There was nothing more for me to do on the scow, and I went back to the bridge of the *Katun* and began to scan the opposite bank of the river with my night glasses. The moon was rising and I could dimly discern a wide meadow screened from the river by some large trees.

Krivolapov was also straining his lynx eyes to penetrate the darkness. We both got quite a shock when we heard a sudden metallic jangling of heavy harness and thought we could make out the silhouettes of what looked like several teams of horses dragging heavy carts behind them.

"Case shot distance shrapnel!" I shouted to the bow gun crews.

The Gunnery Officer, a grizzled old ranker who had begun his career in the frigates of the Imperial navy, was already there.

"Can you see them, Aleksei Ivanovich?"

He thought he did, and laid the guns himself.

Shrapnel set for short burst rent the night with its eery whistling, followed by the dull thud of the explosion. Now pretty clearly we could see horses and men stampeding wildly across the meadow. The Colt and the St. Etienne machine guns added their rattling chorus to the crash of the eighteen-pounders.

The meadows seemed empty. Nothing moved.

"Cease firing!"

Meanwhile the towlines had been made fast. We put a small guard on board the scow and began to move upstream, the *Zaisan* towing the heavy barge and the *Katun* helping with cross towlines alongside. Our progress was very slow. The weak engines of the *Zaisan* and the *Katun* could not propel our caravan against the current of the Irtysh at a speed above three knots.

We puffed slowly up the river for about an hour without any untoward incident. I decided to go down to my room for a nap, while Vadim took charge of the bridge.

I do not know how long I slept—probably an hour or so. Without being called or otherwise disturbed, I woke with a start, and got up, buckling on my belt with the service automatic pistol. Just as I was making for the door leading to the bridge, the large porthole of my room was shattered by bullets, and the silence of the night was rent by what sounded like a sewing machine shop gone crazy. As I rushed up to the bridge, I stumbled over the crumpled-up body of one of the port bow gunners, a very young Jewish high-school boy who had joined the crew of the *Katun* at Omsk as a volunteer. He was making whining noises as he lay on the deck, and I thought he was in a panic and afraid to go to his gun.

"To hell with you, Moishe," kicking him in the small of the back with my heavy boot, "to your gun!"

He got up, and holding his left arm against his chest, brought his right hand to the salute.

"I'm shot through the lungs, sir," he said, and ran to his gun.

Mighty small I felt, but there was no time to do anything about it, and I continued my way to the bridge.

I found Vadim on the port side of the wheelhouse, passing his orders to the pilots by hand signals.

"We're in for it, and no mistake," he greeted me, in English.

There was certainly no reason to disagree with him. The whole left bank of the Irtysh was alive with machine-gun and rifle fire. It looked as though at least two battalions were pounding at us as hard as they could go. Our bow guns were blazing away at the village on top of the hill on the left bank, where rifles were flashing like a thick swarm of fireflies. The St. Etiennes had chosen this moment to jam, and only our Colt guns were firing. The air seemed to be alive with the whining of bullets, and I crept across the bridge to the armored nests of the St. Etiennes. Krivolapov was already

there, trying to get them going. The machine-gun officer also passed me, crawling on his stomach like a huge fat alligator. I left them to their own devices, knowing well that between the two of them they knew more about the whimsical temper of the St. Etiennes than I could ever hope to learn.

Posting myself in front of the wheelhouse with bullets raining hammer blows on its armor plating, I took in the whole scene of action. The *Zaisan* was firing on the village with her small 47-millimeter guns, lighting up the river with the flashes of their discharge. The channel was swerving close in to the right bank, so that we were getting further away from the enemy. Everything seemed to be progressing as smoothly as possible, and I cracked a few jokes with the pilots, whose faces were greenish pale in the flickering binnacle light.

Suddenly an intense white light, very much like the magnesium lights that photographers used in the old days, flared up aft, throwing the gun and the mainmast of the *Katun* into bold relief. The machine-gun fire from shore redoubled its intensity and seemed to take on a triumphant, gloating note.

The boatswain shouted up the bridge:

"The powder magazine is on fire!"

"A fine wake," I thought, "even including the funeral pyre for the faithful retainers!"

Vadim ran aft, while I tried to steady the pilots and the men at the wheel, lest we run aground in the panic. Some of the men thought the game was up and were looking to the safety of their skins. They tried to climb up the side of the scow, seeking a safe haven among the firewood. I opened on them with my automatic and drove them back to their posts.

We were now quite close to the low right bank, and in the dim twilight of dawn I could distinctly see a platoon or so of infantry firing at us from a shallow trench. Krivolapov opened on them with his Lewis gun and they ran like huge gray field-mice and disappeared into the brush. In the intense white light still burning aft I saw a young midshipman, K., standing at full height on the armored emplacement of the gun, emptying his service revolver at them from sheer excitement and enthusiasm.

Then the fire in the powder magazine subsided, and we were again swallowed in the morning mist rent by the fiery bolts from the guns. Vadim reappeared on the bridge, rather the worse for

wear. His jacket was wet and filthy. He had lost his cap, and his face was covered with black smudges. I found out later that he had jumped into the powder magazine and thrown out the burning cartridges of the bow guns, with the aid of the boatswain, a quiet little fellow of whom, thus far, I had had no great opinion.

Between them, they had certainly succeeded in spoiling our auto-da-fé.

As we drew out of the enemy's range I ordered the firing to cease, it being obviously a sheer waste of ammunition to go on blazing into the mist without any knowledge either of the topography or the distribution of the enemy forces.

It was getting light as Vadim and I went over the *Katun* to see what damage had been done. We found three wounded in the sick bay. The Jewish boy, Moische, had served his gun till he collapsed. I rather feared for his life, but the doctor thought he would recover. The other two men had light flesh wounds and after a few days of rest would be well enough for service.

We settled down in the Wardroom, and my Austrian orderly Hans brought us some hot tea and soft boiled eggs. We felt relaxed and drowsy. The room was quite a sight. Most of the wood paneling was splintered by bullets, and the floor was littered with smashed crockery. Vadim was a sorry sight. His hair was singed, his eyebrows were gone, and his hands were badly burned and in need of the doctor's attention.

As we sat drinking tea, we wondered why the enemy had failed to bring his artillery into action, and blessed our patron saints for the luck we had had in scattering the battery that was just getting into position as we took the scow in tow.

Suddenly, without any warning, the wood panels were again peppered with bullets, and we had to rush madly for the bridge.

As soon as our eighteen-pounders and the *Zaisan's* 47-millimeter guns got into action, the enemy's fire was quickly extinguished and we proceeded further upstream after thoroughly drenching the underbrush with the St. Etienne's and Colts. The enemy marksmanship was exceedingly poor. They opened at us at very close range, had all the advantage of deliberate aim, and were free from interference for several minutes. In spite of this, they failed to pick off any of us as we were making our way to our posts over open stretches right in their firing line. To miss us as we were popping up on the bridge or emerging from the ladder in broad daylight

and more or less on a level with the muzzles of their guns, was quite a feat.

As we reached Ust-Ishim, the beach was black with soldiers and Iuriev was waving his cap frantically, calling for cheers in our honor. He immediately came on board and spoiled our otherwise mellow mood by making a speech to the crew: "Heroic seamen, helping in the fight for the great cause . . . an unexampled exploit of dare-devil bravery," and words to that effect, made famous by many a general during the Great War.

Vadim brought Iuriev's elocutionary effort to a close by suggesting a round of eggnog.

Meanwhile, the Captain of the *Zaisan* came to make his report. He supplied the lighter side of the night's events. The civilian skipper of his ship had his wife on board. As we started from Ust-Ishim the previous evening, the good lady thought the weather looked favorable and that a little laundering was in order. So she washed some of her intimate garments, as well as a couple of her husband's shirts. In half an hour's time she had the washing all rigged up nicely on a line fixed up between the mast and the wheelhouse.

When the firing began the skipper's lady was most anxious about her underthings.

"I don't want them riddled by these here bullets," said she, and made a dash for the bridge to take her laundry in. She got a slight flesh wound for her trouble, but rescued the washing just the same. I am afraid we did not show proper sympathy with the gallant lady's mishap. A good many rather broad jokes were cracked at her expense and we toasted her in eggnog, amidst ribald gaiety.

I spent the afternoon typing out a complete record of our proceedings—I wonder where it is now!—and in attending to the routine correspondence and "returns" that continued to plague fighting men even during the Civil War.

In the evening I went to look up Vadim with the idea of suggesting a walk ashore. His room defied all description. Chaos reigned supreme. Blankets, pyjamas, raincoats, books, empty vodka bottles, sea boots—all indiscriminately heaped together on the couch and on the floor. Vadim was uproariously drunk and continued to take one stiff drink after the other, while I gazed in astonishment at his performance, which broke all precedent in his behavior.

"You're a scoundrel, White, to have killed that poor Red cavalryman in cold blood! I can still see him sitting his horse gazing con-

temptuously at us, like a *bogatyr* of the old lays. Nice wake, indeed! Just one murder after another."

After an unsuccessful attempt to coax the bottle away from him, I closed the door of his cabin and went for a solitary walk along the beach.

BLUECHER'S DEFEAT

THE Omsk White Command had dispatched Lieutenant General Redko, of the Military Engineers' Corps, to take command of the forces operating on the Irtysh. The White army units thus subordinated to General Redko were divided into two groups. One group was slowly retreating up the Irtysh in the direction of Tara-Omsk, under Colonel Iuriev. The other group was several hundred miles away, retreating down the Irtysh from Tobolsk.

As there was not much for us to do in the way of covering Iuriev's retreat, Vadim and I decided to steam up to Tara in the gunboat *Katun*, which I commanded, and pay our respects to the General, who had established his headquarters in that city. Our flotilla was placed in "operating subordination" to Redko, which meant in plain language that we had to carry out his orders in so far as operations against the enemy were concerned, but that otherwise we were independent of him.

Just as we were about to weigh anchor, the wireless operator delivered a cipher message from General Redko's H.Q.

Vadim read the radiogram over my shoulder, as I decoded it. The flotilla was instructed to explore "by their own means" the region south of the Irtysh up to a point some hundred and twenty miles from the river, "with particular emphasis on establishing definitely whether enemy patrols have penetrated in that direction."

"The old bird got mixed up as to points of the compass," commented Vadim, "all the localities he mentions are on dry land. There isn't even a small brook running into the Irtysh from there."

"But, Vadim, he must have our seaplane squadron in mind. The idea is to reconnoiter the *taiga* from the air."

"Sheer nonsense. Our old rickety planes will never survive such a long flight. And not even a decent place for an emergency landing—nothing but treetops."

"Besides, what can they possibly see in the dense *taiga* brush? A waste of planes and pilots, I call it."

"Well, let's draft a very naïve message—something to the effect that gunboats have no rollers and that we are unable to proceed overland, and add that I am proceeding to Tara and will discuss the matter with the General personally."

My radio was sent off in something like the following form:

"Headquarters Irtysh Force.

Your message date number three four two unable carry out instructions as flotilla has no mounted scouts at its disposal. C.O. flotilla proceeding Tara for personal report."

By this time, the head of our seaplane squadron, Marchenko, had come in. Vadim handed over Redko's message, and our reply.

Marchenko grunted, "Serves him right, the old dugout. What does he know about the Civil War—or seaplanes, for that matter."

The Chief of our air force was a picturesque fellow, and his costume was as striking as his character. He was dressed in a blue flannel shirt buttoned up to the throat and belted. Top boots, an old worn naval cap, a service pistol stuck in the belt without holster and with a couple of hand grenades dangling from it, completed his attire. Only a very shrewd observer would have recognized him as an officer of the Imperial navy. The average person would have probably mistaken him for a Communist bluejacket.

Marchenko's dislike for generals was probably even stronger than his dislike of the Bolsheviks. I think that if he had had his way, he would gladly have seen them all shot.

He was very keen to go with us to Tara. "Might be of use for technical details, when you're talking to that dumb-bell of a general."

On arrival at Tara, a straggling Siberian city whose chief industry consisted in a vodka distillery, we marched up to the District Military Officer's quarters, occupied by the staff of the Irtysh forces.

Redko received us at his desk. He was a short, thickset man of fifty or fifty-five. His regulation field uniform, with broad silver-striped shoulder straps, contrasted with our—to say the least—informal garb.

He greeted us pleasantly enough: "Ah, the naval Siamese twins! At first I thought it was a double-barreled name and only discovered later that you were two people signing the messages."

Vadim introduced Marchenko, who scowled at the General and made no effort at small talk.

The General turned immediately to the business in hand.

"I want you to send out your planes immediately to explore the localities mentioned in my message. Please have this order carried out before noon tomorrow, as I intend to take further disposition in accordance with your report."

Vadim made a clear statement of our case: the lack of suitable places for emergency landings, the bad state of the motors, the old fabric on the wings, and last, but not least, the impossibility of the pilots seeing anything in the dense underbrush of the *taiga*.

Redko listened, drumming impatiently with his fingers on the top of his desk.

I added that the tactical instructions governing operations of seaplanes did not cover extended inland flights.

The General answered petulantly: "I know all about that. I'm an engineer myself. Just the same, I want my orders carried out."

This gave Marchenko his opening.

"It's quite obvious you are an engineer, your Excellency. Jack of all trades, and master of none. What you military engineers know about seaplanes would make great material for the funny papers."

The General was taken aback, and lost his composure. Then he made a fatal mistake. Instead of standing firm, and giving us the choice either of carrying out his orders or definitely refusing to do so, he entered into a long technical argument with Marchenko about the Model Nine seaplane, its qualities and defects. Our fierce flyer worsted him at every turn.

Whereupon Vadim stood very primly at attention and begged to be excused as he had several matters to attend to which could not wait, and we filed out of the headquarters of the Irtysh force, without giving the General a chance to repeat his orders. Soon after dark we were back with Iuriev's forces.

Vadim was in one of his planning moods and hardly said a word during dinner. As we went for our usual constitutional on the beach, he remarked: "I don't care a rap about the impression we have made on Redko today. But we mustn't give the army a chance to say that the navy lay down on the job, or funk. The seaplanes cannot go scouting hundreds of miles away from the river, but I think we can turn the tables on Bluecher and the Reds, if I am right in what I believe to be his disposition of forces."

Vadim, from seaplane reports and from the experience of our

recent raid behind Bluecher's lines, had come to the conclusion that the enemy had scattered his forces. The Reds had no supply service to speak of, and lived on the population of the villages strung out along the Irtysh. "I figure that they have one, or at most two battalions quartered in each village."

Iuriev had a good chasseur battalion. The flotilla had at its disposal Colonel Kolesnikov's special detachment of about one hundred and twenty men, with a heavy percentage of officers serving in the ranks and attached, in some indefinite way, to the river forces.

"This, with two gunboats and the seaplanes, should be enough to put Bluecher on the blink. All we have to do is to fight four pitched battles in one day, so that the enemy is taken entirely unawares."

Iuriev's division did not attempt any offensive action for several weeks, and it was reasonable to believe that Bluecher's troops had become very cocky and indolent in their ways. If our infantry had stomach enough to fight one engagement after another as we embarked them near the various villages occupied by the Reds, we had a fair chance of rolling up the entire brigade of the enemy which was in immediate pursuit of Iuriev's division.

Vadim flew in one of our planes to see Iuriev, who was away from his headquarters, and soon brought him back on board the *Katun*. Our friend was delighted with the plan, arranged for the Chasseur Battalion to prepare for embarkation, and said that he would come himself with us on the *Katun*.

After embarking the troops we started downstream in leisurely fashion, timing the arrival at our first objective at about five A. M., so that we could launch the attack at sunrise.

At four in the morning, when I got up and went on deck, I was surprised to see that none of the officers of the Special Detachment was up, and that my Executive Officer, a temporary army officer who had served with the various White river gunboat flotillas since 1918, was nowhere to be seen.

The Officer of the Watch, whom I sent below to find the Executive Officer and to rouse the staff of the Special Detachment, returned in a few minutes and reported that the Executive Officer was sick and could not get up. I inquired about the officers of the Special Detachment.

"They are all sick, sir. I could not get any of them up."

This struck me as rather a surprising epidemic, since I had left them perfectly well only a few hours earlier.

Our medical officer, whom I sent for, made his round, and after some hesitation reported: "They are not sick at all, sir. A case of narcotic stupor. Apparently they have all taken a strong dose of coke."

The doctor's report surprised me considerably, for so far I had never noticed any narcotic addicts among the officers of the flotilla.

Here was a nice kettle of fish. We were supposed to begin landing troops within an hour, and all the officers of the detachment were unfit for duty.

"Go ahead, Doc," said I; "give them the strongest restoratives you know of, regardless of consequences. I take full responsibility for any mishaps. We've got to wake them up, the dope hounds."

There was no use proceeding further, so I anchored the ship and signaled the rest of the small squadron to do the same.

Vadim was furious when he came on deck and heard my report. This coke feast spelt ruin to all his plans, since in a few hours the enemy would be warned by their spies that we had gone downstream with troops aboard.

At first he wanted to make an example of the dope fiends. "We'll hold court immediately after flag parade. These fellows well deserve to be shot for cowardice in the face of the enemy."

"Whom are you going to land, if we execute all the officers? Let's be practical. Tell them if they win the day the whole matter will be overlooked. But if they get licked we will not reëmbark them, but turn the machine guns on them."

I do not know what horse medicine our good surgeon used on the devotees of white snuff, but by five o'clock they came to and, somewhat crestfallen, crept out on deck to meet the rising sun. The Executive Officer came with his tail between his legs. I refused to speak to him, except to tell him that we would settle accounts when the day's work was done.

It was well after five when we weighed anchor and proceeded upstream. Where the river made a sharp elbow turn we ran into an empty scow, manned by a few Austrian prisoners. We hove to and spoke to them, and were told that the next village was occupied by a battalion of Red infantry who had arrived there only the night before.

As soon as a convenient spot was found, the *Katun* was brought close inshore and the detachment landed. The gray-haired Gunnery Officer fixed up the panoramic sights on the bow guns, and a field telephone line was carried forward to establish an observation post.

We were all very tense as the men disappeared into the brush, and for some twenty minutes there was no word from them. Then the field telephone began to splutter and a point on the map was indicated as an objective for our gunfire.

The Gunnery Officer supervised the laying of the bow guns with tender, almost maternal care. He checked the alignment, and after the double crash of the guns the shrapnel whizzed over the copse that separated us from the village.

The telephone came to life: "Good work. Add one hundred yards ten fractions left."

The guns crashed again. "Cease fire," came from the observation post.

This was rather perplexing. We could not understand what had happened and why the infantry required no further artillery support.

I called up the observer and got from him the story of the amazing fluke that had happened. By the time our detachment had reached the fringe of the copse facing the village, a battalion of Red infantry appeared in a column on the road close to them.

"And our first salvo of shrapnel burst right over their heads. It came like a bolt from the blue. The detachment opened on them with machine guns and rifles. They scattered and ran like a bunch of cattle."

I telephoned to Kolesnikov not to waste any time, but to return to the *Katun* immediately with whatever spoils he had succeeded in capturing.

When the detachment came back in high spirits, we learned that the Komissar of the battalion was killed and its Commander captured. A few Red soldiers and two machine guns completed the booty.

A crowd of our sailors gathered round the captured Red Commander, who was badly wounded in the leg. The boatswain, who was very bitter against the Reds, walked close up to the prisoner. After hurling at him every epithet of his comprehensive seagoing vocabulary, the old sea dog made a gesture to slap the Red in the face.

"Boatswain, attend to your immediate duties," I called out sharply. "Send for the medical officer to dress the prisoner's wound."

The Commander was a tall, powerfully built fellow with a great deal of simple dignity in his manner. His wound was a painful one, as the bone of one of his legs was shattered. He made no sound, however, as the doctor cut his boot and dressed the wound.

The men of the *Katun* were greatly exercised over the fact that the prisoner wore women's silk stockings.

"Took them off a girl he killed, the dirty dog!"

"Should be shot at sight! Why waste dressings on his wound?"

The Red kept his composure, thanked the doctor for the cigarette he had offered him and resolutely declined to answer any questions as to the disposition and number of the Red troops.

"You would have done the same in my place."

The troops were embarked and the prisoners sent to confinement on board the passenger steamer which carried the Chasseur Battalion.

It was a glorious morning. The leaves on the trees were beginning to turn orange and crimson. The Irtysh was wide and impressive, encompassed by the vivid-hued forest.

As we turned a sharp bend we saw a tiny village on the crest of the cliffs of the shore. Krivolapov, whose lynx eye constantly searched the shore, whispered excitedly, "See those peaked helmets above the fence? The Reds are lining up in the village street."

We opened with all our machine guns, shooting at the fence and a little beyond it. The tall cliff hurled back at us, and amplified, the raucous rattle-tattle of our Colt and St. Etienne machine guns.

In about five minutes we ceased firing as the peaked helmets disappeared, and Vadim landed with the detachment to see things for himself.

He very soon came back, visibly shocked, almost nauseated by what he had seen.

"It's sheer butchery. The poor fellows are lying in heaps behind the fence. I think we destroyed an entire company. It was sickening to see the wounded mixed up with the dead."

Off we went again. The next settlement was the big trading village of Ust-Ishim. We expected that it would be occupied by a large Red force.

As we were steaming down the wide sweep of the Irtysh to the village, we heard explosions behind us on the right, and at first thought that the *Zaisan* had opened with her small guns on some group of the enemy on the right bank. Very soon, however, we realized that the noise was caused by low bursts of shrapnel, obviously fired from Ust-Ishim.

The enemy, then, had some artillery and were forewarned of our approach. This meant a really serious action and not a picnic, such as we had had so far. Our weak gunboats had no protection for boilers and engines, and an unlucky hit by a common shell from a field gun could put us out of action.

Vadim looked very carefully through his glasses at the belfry of Ust-Ishim which was now within sight.

"Try twenty cables, fifteen fractions to the left of the belfry," he told the Gunnery Officer.

We fired three or four salvos from our bow guns. The cotton-wool clouds from the enemy shrapnel ceased.

"What next?" asked Vadim, and ordered the guns to cease firing.

We put on speed and soon came within full view of Ust-Ishim. The events of the next few minutes were in a measure conditioned by our respective positions on the bridge of the *Katun*.

Vadim was standing right forward at the mast. I was leaning with my back against the armor plates of the wheelhouse, so that I could see the whole picture and at the same time keep an eye on the pilots. Iuriev was inside the wheelhouse, looking through the slits in the armor plate.

As soon as we emerged around the bend, we came under very heavy machine-gun and rifle fire. The enemy artillery, however, was silent. A line of freshly thrown-up trenches encircled the church and the graveyard on the bluff dominating the village. There were also shallow trenches dug all along the village. We were being pelted by a hailstorm of Red bullets.

"Where are their guns?" asked Vadim.

I merely shrugged my shoulders.

We found that the landing-stage had been unmoored and taken into a creek. As the water was rather shallow near the shore, we did not dare attempt to land our troops, besides which the fire was too heavy to allow us to do so with the ship's boats. At the same time we did not want to run the risk of being grounded by trying to hug the shore too closely.

We steamed down the Irtysh along the water front of the village, returning the enemy's heavy fire with our machine guns. Then we turned around, and went upstream.

Iuriev apparently felt out of his element on board the *Katun*. He was obviously quite impressed with the strength of the Red entrenchments and by the volume of their fire.

"I think there are too many Reds in the village. We shall not be able to tackle them successfully, now that they have had time to entrench themselves. Better call it a day."

Neither Vadim nor I felt that way. This was an Army-Navy game, and we were in charge of the Navy team. We had no intention of coming out second best.

"Sorry, Colonel. You'd better speak to Vadim. He's in command of the flotilla. I'm merely a gunboat captain."

The enemy bullets were hammering out a murderous carillon on the armor plates of the wheelhouse. To run the gauntlet of that fire across the long open space on the bridge did not appeal to Iuriev. So he let it go at that.

Vadim shouted to me through his megaphone: "How about beaching your darned *Katun* opposite the trenches near the church? We can then land the troops from the lee side, and give them a sporting chance to capture the position."

The idea appealed to me. There was a certain amount of risk involved, but if we should succeed in capturing the trenches, which were obviously the key to the Red position, the village would become untenable for the enemy, and their artillery would have to withdraw.

So I called Krivolapov and told him to arrange with the machine-gun crews to tackle the four machine-gun nests of the enemy. He crept around the armored emplacements of the Colts and St. Etiennes and pointed out to the crews the particular machine-gun nests they should tackle.

Then hard to starboard and full speed ahead. The flat-bottomed gunboat rushed on shore with zest and piled up on a sand dune almost to the bridge wings. All this happened before a shingled girl could plait her hair, as the Russian proverb has it.

The starboard machine guns immediately opened fire, and the heavy booming of the 130 millimeter gun aft shook the whole ship. The large shells were hitting the trench and sending up huge columns of smoke and sand.

Meanwhile Kolesnikov was rapidly landing his men from the port side, where they were sheltered by the hull of the ship from the angry beehive of bullets. The enemy fire continued unabated, their bullets whipping up the sand on the top of the dune.

The men of the detachment, momentarily covered by a high point in the sand dune, were overawed by the intensity of the hailstorm of lead, and obviously hesitant to run the gauntlet of five hundred yards of open space in broad daylight.

There was no time to lose. The enemy artillery might at any moment open fire on us. It would then be a matter of a few minutes before the *Katun* was reduced to a smoldering heap of twisted iron and cremated bodies.

I jumped down from the bridge on to the sand, and crawled up to Kolesnikov.

"Must I show you how to lead your men, Colonel? After the events of last night?"

The brave old man turned livid under the sting of my insult. He got up, put his cane under his arm, and marched off *solo* on the enemy trenches.

And then I witnessed the most impressive thing I saw during all the Civil War. The men of the detachment formed up, slung their rifles, and at a slow pace, without a cheer and keeping their alignment, moved on the enemy trenches. Their dead and wounded were crumpling up behind the advancing wave that never faltered. Later we captured the papers of the staff of the Red brigade which held Ust-Ishim. The report of that attack was as follows: "Some foreign troops, probably English, were landed from the gunboat. They advanced on the trenches in perfect order and in complete silence, in a wave that our machine guns could not break."

Apparently the Reds could not imagine any of their compatriots attacking without raising a shout or starting at a trot. The silent terror of that thin line of men slowly plodding up the dune under withering fire was more than Bluecher's men could stand. Our big gun succeeded in hitting one of their machine-gun emplacements, and up went the timbers and the mangled bodies of the gun crew. Meanwhile, the Chasseur Battalion landed in the creek and was moving in two waves around the right flank and to the rear of the trenches.

Baggy figures in khaki, which looked mouse-gray from dust, ran in a compact mass up the connecting trench into the shelter of the village street, our machine guns spurring them on.

The *Zaisan* came up and helped us to return the *Katun* to its natural element. In a few minutes she was afloat again, and I heaved a sigh of relief. The enemy artillery never opened up.

Off we went further downstream to intercept the retreat of the enemy. At this point, Iuriev had the unfortunate idea of sending Redko a report by wireless about our doings.

"... enemy defeated in three engagements. . . . Ust-Ishim captured. . . . Red brigade in full retreat . . . are pursuing the enemy in direction of Vagai . . ."

Some of the Red baggage train was passing through the next village downstream as we came in view of it. The road followed closely the bend of the river.

We opened on them with shrapnel. There was a mad rush of army wagons, horses, and men in all directions, outlined in black silhouette against the fiery sky of the sunset.

Through an oversight, a couple of lyddite shells were fired instead of shrapnel and set one of the *izbas* of the village on fire. The wind

blowing along the village street carried firebrands from one straw roof to another. Soon the entire village was enveloped in flames and smoke. The inhabitants were rushing frantically around with water pails, dragging their scanty belongings to safety, or trying to save their cattle and horses.

We immediately stopped firing. Iuriev joined us on the bridge, as we gazed at this typical picture of civil war—a defenseless village aflame. We were all quite shaken by this swift destruction of a peaceful settlement.

“To hell with civil war!” said Vadim. “We’ll never be able to show our faces anywhere along the Irtysh after this show’s over.”

The wireless operator interrupted our musings with a message from Redko.

“On what authority did you engage in a major action? Return immediately to Ust-Ishim. Wait for further orders.”

This was definite enough. We had no choice but to return and let the enemy escape from us.

Vadim and I felt, however, that we could not knuckle down in silence and let the General’s remarkable order pass without telling the world how we felt about it. So we sent a wireless to Redko with copies to the Commanding General, Eastern Front, Chief of Staff of the White armies of Siberia and Minister of the Navy: “Are carrying out your orders to cease pursuit of enemy thereby enabling him to withdraw and reorganize without interference on our part.”

Iuriev joined us in signing this radio, and got himself into infernal trouble by doing so. He was Redko’s subordinate, whereas the flotilla was only in “operative subordination.” Prompt vengeance was wreaked upon him, and he was relieved of his command for insubordination and for “letting the enemy escape.”

Upon our return to Ust-Ishim we found out why the enemy artillery had suddenly ceased firing when we approached the village. The only two guns that the Reds possessed at Ust-Ishim were stationed in the market place behind the church. Our first salvo of shrapnel burst right over the guns and scattered the crews. Our next salvo prevented them from taking the guns to another position, as the horses stampeded when they were led up to the guns. The chasseurs found both guns intact, with their panoramic sights on.

After anchoring the ship, Vadim and I went for our usual evening walk ashore. We ran into a soldier of the Chasseur Battalion, a workman from the Votkinsk factory on the Kama, with blood oozing

from his hastily bandaged arm. With a heavy horsewhip he was thrashing a somewhat skinny and puny-looking Red soldier.

As we approached the pair, we heard the Red soldier screaming at the top of his voice, "Let me go, you brute! You have no right to beat me. I am an intellectual."

To this surprising plea the Votkinsk workman stoutly rejoined, without relaxing his efforts with the whip, "That's another good reason for thrashing you. All the trouble in this world comes from intellectuals."

It cost us considerable effort to get the Red soldier away from the chasseur. The latter was courteous, but firm: "The vermin are not fit to live. What do we want with intellectuals? Parasites and intriguers!"

On this grotesque note ended the day of Bluecher's first defeat on the Irtysh. He is a great man now. He taught the Chinese how to fight each other, licked Chang Tso Liang's Manchurians on the Chinese Eastern, and commands the Soviet army in the Far East. Probably he learned a thing or two about the use of gunboats and will not be caught napping on the Sungary and the Amur as he was on the Irtysh. He is a stout fellow. Both Vadim and I have a sneaking liking for him.

OMENS

AS OCTOBER 1919 faded into November, Omsk, capital of White Siberia and residence of Admiral Kolchak, the Supreme Ruler of Russia, was in a mood of tense expectancy.

Endless trains of *teploushki* (Russian equivalent for *Quarante Hommes Huit Chevaux*) and regular passenger cars were departing east each day. They carried the usual flotsam of civil war: military staffs, refugees, government officials looking for a new and better capital, foreign missions disillusioned as to Kolchak's Government and ready to sell him to the Bolsheviki, army hospitals with their pathetic cargo of mutilated, fever-racked men, the goods and chattels of cabinet ministers of the Omsk Government, and political camp followers fleeing from the sinking ship of state.

The freezing of the Irtysh having rendered our flotilla useless, I was appointed to the command of a battalion of the Naval Regiment stationed at Omsk, and was an interested spectator of the hustle and bustle of this flight from the doomed city. My battalion was part of the shock group of the defense of Omsk, commanded by General Voitsekhovskii, which existed mostly on paper or in the roseate dreams of the Operating Division of G.H.Q.

As far as I was able to discover, plans for defense were so vague or so utterly fantastic that I decided that no real stand against the enemy was contemplated. The whole thing was a brave show to reassure the civilian population and create the impression of an impending halt in the long Siberian retreat.

My battalion was quartered in a fairly modern building located opposite G.H.Q.; the latter was rapidly emptying itself of its official population, who were moving east to destinations somewhat uncertain and to a future definitely unpleasant. I drilled my battalion throughout the short Siberian October days, training the companies for field service in an effort to whip them into an approximation of a fighting

unit. Both officers and men were new to field warfare, having manned gunboat flotillas during the summer and received practically no infantry training before their enrollment in the battalion in the middle of October. Most of my spare time was devoted to the question of supplies, running around the city in frantic efforts to separate the Naval Ordnance Department from some machine guns, and educating the junior officers in the ABC of field tactics and patrol work. My subalterns were sadly deficient in these branches of military science and were not particularly willing pupils. They did not fancy themselves as infantry officers—"the navy's much smarter, you know."

Captain R. of the Russian navy, who shared my room, was a graduate of a famous German technical college and an expert on codes. In the evening, Russian fashion, we discussed everything under the sun, and one night we drifted ultimately into fatalism, clairvoyance, and kindred subjects. R. managed to combine an excellent training in the natural sciences with a penchant for soothsayers and other practitioners of the art of peeping behind the veil.

"Here, in Omsk, there's a very remarkable clairvoyante, Madame Voitov, the wife of a colonel on the General Staff," said he, as we were turning in; "she has quite a reputation. Made an impression on several of my friends."

My scepticism got the better of my manners and I expressed rather outspoken doubts on the subject of crystal-gazing in general and Madame Voitov's delphic gifts in particular. R. was somewhat ruffled, but managed to talk me into calling on the good lady the following afternoon. After all, there was a decided dearth of entertainment at Omsk and, with due apologies to Hollywood, a good clairvoyante may turn out to be at least as amusing as a bad movie.

Next day we set out for Madame Voitov's, picking our way in the deep mud of the suburban streets of Omsk. R. and I were the only callers that afternoon. R., who was apparently quite well known to the soothsayer, was immediately admitted to the inner sanctum, where Madame Voitov received her clientèle. After nearly an hour he reappeared, looking rather bewildered and pulling viciously at his moustache. Madame Voitov followed him into the room and indicated by a gesture that she was ready to receive me in her study. As I approached the door she hesitated for a moment and then turned to speak to R. in a low voice, obviously not wishing to be overheard. I returned to my chair while the clairvoyante took R. back to her study and remained closeted with him for several minutes.

All this was rather puzzling, and I was still more bewildered when

R. returned and told me Madame Voitov wished to be excused; she was tired, and did not feel disposed to give another séance.

As we walked home I teased R. "You are in collusion with the good lady. She asked you a few questions so as to be able to tell me something plausible. She pumped you and found you an easy mark. I bet she'll ask us to come back in a day or two and parade her wisdom."

That was too much. R. went off like a rocket.

"You're a silly ass. I wish I'd never taken you. She's a very remarkable woman, so quit that joking stuff. She's a lady, too, and I'm not taking any derogatory remarks from you or anyone else!" He was in good form and continued to berate me till we got home.

By way of a peace offering, I got out the last bottle of Highland Cream given me by the head of the British Naval Mission. R. liked whisky, and was by now a little ashamed of his outburst. When he had put away a second highball he settled down to his pipe and his mellowest story about a visit to London he had made before the war. I reverted to the Voitov incident and begged him to tell me the truth, the whole truth, etc. Aided and abetted, perhaps, by the Highland Cream, R. made a clean breast of it.

"I was frightfully annoyed with you, and I'd get in awfully wrong with Madame Voitov if she knew I told you, but here goes: A couple of weeks ago a young army officer went to see her and asked to be told his future. As soon as he entered the room she felt all sorts of antagonism radiating from him, and had a presentiment of disaster. She admitted him to her sanctum and after a short séance was convinced that he had only a few days to live, and that his death would be the culmination of ghastly suffering. He pressed her with questions, and she finally admitted what she had seen. The youngster kept a stiff upper lip and pretended he didn't mind. All he wanted to know was whether he'd be killed outright or whether worse was in store for him. She tried to be noncommittal, and the boy left for the front that evening. A few days later he was wounded in a skirmish and captured by an irregular Red cavalry unit. They tortured him to death in order to get information about the White troops. A White regiment that captured the village later found his mutilated body.

"When she saw you," R. continued, "she felt the same sort of influences. She had just heard of the youngster's death, from her husband, and the whole thing upset her. She told me she felt so much trouble ahead for you that she didn't want to go to the crystal. And then—it was rather queer—she pointed to her right temple and said: 'Death passed your friend here a few weeks ago.'"

This made me sit up. It was true that some weeks before I had come pretty near to being snuffed out. My friend Vadim and I were standing on the bridge of the gunboat *Katun* in the river Irtysh, near Tobolsk. We were under heavy machine-gun fire from Bolshevik trenches on the steep shore. A bullet whizzed past between us, hit the armor plate of the wheelhouse and ricocheted, lodging itself in Vadim's forehead. He quietly dug out the bullet, pocketed it and continued pulling on his pipe. It had barely missed my right temple.

At that moment another strange coincidence flashed through my mind. On leaving Madame Voitov's house, I had noticed an old man grinding out "*O Sole Mio*" on a decrepit hurdy-gurdy, while a moth-eaten ringtail monkey pirouetted and curtsied to a small group of admiring children. The incongruity of that languorous melody under the slate-colored clouds of the chilly Siberian day was my only impression at the time. Now I remembered that in Greenwich Village, three years before, as I left the house of a Breton clairvoyante that Frances had persuaded me to see, a cheerful fat Abruzzese was playing the self-same tune. The old Breton had told me that I would go to Siberia, that there would be revolution in Russia and that I should be in grave peril for several years. At the time I had paid little attention to her predictions, as Siberia seemed the last place in the world to go to, and revolution was so usual a word when my country was discussed during the war, that I had begun to accept it as a viewpoint, rather than a forecast.

"Rather uncanny," I said to myself, as I turned out the light.

Two weeks later, units belonging to the rear guard of Kolchak's army were passing through Omsk. The regiments marched through the city in a semblance of order. Most of the men had short sheepskin coats and felt boots. There were very few files to a company or squadron. We still had no marching orders, and no word as to the line we should occupy for the defense of the city.

The Battalion Adjutant, Kuzmich, with several mounted orderlies, was at General Voitsekhovskii's headquarters. Experience in the Civil War had taught me to be somewhat sceptical of the foresight and organizing ability of the commanding generals, and I therefore preferred to be kept fully posted by Kuzmich, whose judgment was excellent, rather than entrust myself to the tender mercies of the Chief of Staff, who might or might not remember to notify me in time to clear out of Omsk. In these days of retreat, staffs were often too busy to give orders to all units as to the course they should pursue.

On the morning of November 13, Kuzmich sent word by one of

his orderlies that General Voitsekhovskii had left Headquarters—destination unknown—and that the Chief of Staff was busy packing files and papers. I thought it advisable to have our baggage train and ammunition carts removed to a village some ten miles east of Omsk. The Commanding Officer of the regiment agreed and by noon our traincarts were packed and on their way east under the escort of a platoon. In the evening Kuzmich notified me that the Chief of Staff had also left Headquarters without saying where he was going or issuing any orders to the units of the group. I had my horse saddled, and went over to see the Colonel of the Chasseur Battalion stationed on the other side of the Om River. His was the only other fairly reliable unit in town.

We discussed the situation, and decided to take joint measures for the safety of our units and make an attempt to get in touch with the General Headquarters of the Eastern Front, so as to get instructions for further action. We worked out the details of patrols and field posts on the shore of the Irtysh and on the road leading north from Omsk. We also decided to establish a field telephone service and thus be independent of the city central telephone. Our dispositions were approved by the Commanding Officer, who meanwhile was busy trying to establish a connection with Front Headquarters.

After attending to orders regarding patrols and field posts, I went to bed musing on the eventualities of a fight in the streets of Omsk. It was rather difficult to guess on which side the reserve regiments quartered in the city would fight. I rather surmised that they would join the Red army as soon as things got too hot for us to keep an eye on them.

Next morning I was awakened early and somewhat unceremoniously. Kuzmich was shaking me energetically, and nearly rolled me out of bed in his eagerness to interrupt my slumbers.

"The Chief of the Operation Division's also gone. Nothing but a few clerks and orderlies left at headquarters of the Defense Force. No orders as to the dispositions our battalion or the other units should take."

Having gone to bed fully dressed and booted, it took no more than a minute to buckle on my service automatic pistol and the curved Cossack *shashka* which I was using instead of the regulation naval sword—a too clumsy weapon for real service if cold steel was needed. I ran over to the room occupied by the Commanding Officer of the Naval Regiment and found him already up and at his desk. He told me he had succeeded in making connections with General Head-

quarters of the Front. Both our regiment and the chasseurs were instructed not to engage in any fighting in the streets of Omsk, but to preserve law and order in the city until enemy patrols began to approach. Then to retreat to Tatarskoie where further orders would await us. My battalion was detailed to preserve order, patrol the streets, and forestall the looting to be expected during the evacuation. The other battalions of the regiment were lined up on the square facing the barracks, and after a short address by the Colonel were marched off, accompanied by the two-wheeled carriages of the regimental machine-gun company. Having seen them off, I established connection by field telephone with my outposts on the Irtysh and with the Colonel of the chasseurs, who were getting ready to move out of the city. I also took measures to cover my own line of retreat by field posts and patrols along the streets leading to the Tatarskoie road.

About noon the Red patrols appeared on the other side of the Irtysh and opened a desultory fire on my outposts. These withdrew, after succeeding in dismounting a few of the Red scouts, and fell back behind the protecting screen of our own mounted scouts, who took over the duty of guarding the rear of the battalion, with instructions to keep in sight of the enemy without engaging them.

The deep-rutted, muddy road was frozen hard. The tramp, tramp of the heavy hobnailed boots of the marines made a cheerful crackling sound as the khaki-clad column wound its way over the undulating plain dividing Omsk from Tatarskoie. The snowfall had been slight, and only here and there white patches interrupted the yellow-brown monotony of the steppe.

I rode ahead of the column on the sorry nag supplied me by the regiment to replace my own horse, which had gone lame the day before. Kuzmich accompanied me. He was silent and morose and apparently much preoccupied with his own thoughts. I noticed that in contrast to his usual brisk, upright seat, he was slouching loosely in the saddle. And I was just as poor company as Kuzmich. The problem of extricating ourselves from the clutches of the Red cavalry in the plain was obviously a very difficult one. I was pretty certain that by the next morning the enemy would send out a regiment or two to cut off our rear guard, and in close formation our marines would have quite a task to defend themselves against cavalry attacks and at the same time move ahead fast enough not to be overtaken by the Red infantry. Our screen of mounted scouts was but poor protection, and in a few minutes the enemy could have scattered it. Its usefulness lay

mainly in giving us warning of the appearance of enemy cavalry in the plain.

Our horses were ambling quietly along, and neither of us was paying much attention to the road, when my musings were abruptly interrupted and I came very near to being thrown when my horse suddenly shied.

The cause of the excitement was a human corpse lying across the road—a civilian, in city clothes. The face was completely disfigured by a rifle or pistol shot at close range. In the course of the war, and particularly during the past two years of civil war, we had both become almost inured to the sight of corpses, but I was strangely shaken as I looked at this lonely body in civilian clothing left on the road. A great mongrel dog snarled his displeasure at being interrupted at his gruesome meal.

"A bad omen, sir," said Kuzmich, as I brought up my horse abreast of his. "Reminds me of the end of Block's poem 'The Twelve.' Only the poor bourzhoui is already dead, and the revolution is feeding on his carcass."

We lingered a moment, fascinated by the symbolism of the body and the dog.

Kuzmich's suggestive words set me thinking. Here was a peaceful citizen dressed in his everyday clothes, which were entirely inadequate protection against the rigors of a march through Siberia. His hands indicated a man of culture. He had probably died, like many another peaceful Russian citizen, a victim of the turmoil of civil war. Both sides were alien to him and, convinced that arms can settle nothing, he did not believe in direct action. Now—here he was. The war had stretched out its claws for him and left his mutilated body by the wayside.

As we rode slowly away, I thought of Madame Voitov, and for the first time in all these long years of war and civil war, I felt a sense of impending personal disaster. It came to me that probably my fate would not be very different from that which had overtaken the stranger. I had never cared much what happened to the body after death, but the idea of my mortal remains being devoured by stray dogs gave me some very uncomfortable moments.

The men were not broken in to long marches, and their feet were badly chafed in their heavy English boots when we at last arrived, late in the evening, at the village which was to be our quarters for the night. After attending to the usual routine of quartering the battalion, establishing field posts, speaking to the village mayor, and

sending off a report to regimental headquarters, I betook myself to the *izba* of a local trader where I was billeted, and prepared to eat the supper of stewed beef and potatoes which my Austrian orderly prepared in his usual appetizing manner.

As I took off my greatcoat, I noted that my badge of the Naval Guard, the Iron Cross with the late Emperor's monogram, was missing from my tunic. The badge had a special lock and screw attachment, and I was at a loss to explain how it could have become detached, or slipped through the tight sword belt which I wore over my greatcoat.

This incident upset me more than the corpse. The old and partly discolored badge was my only link with the past. It was the symbol of the great imperial city built by the Emperor-Shipwright Peter; or the days of the Battle of Kulm, when the Naval Guards helped to defeat Vandamme and bring the Corsican to bay; of stately ships of the Imperial navy; of the great Empire of Russia in contrast to the miserable present, when one of the last White armies was in full retreat before the Reds.

During supper I mentioned the loss of the badge to Kuzmich and, as he taxed me with joining the ranks of the superstitious, I told him I felt that I should never wear the Naval Guard uniform, never again be a real officer of a real regiment of which one could be proud. We were now a mere rabble, pretending to be soldiers.

Kuzmich thought that the corpse had made me unduly pessimistic, and did his best to cheer me. Our armies would rally, we should defeat the Reds, and Moscow would yet see our flags. I did not argue, and went out to make my rounds of the field posts.

THE WINTER MARCH

DAY after day the Naval Regiment marched eastward across Siberia. First through the snow-covered steppes dotted here and there with coppices of birch trees, with Tatar villages on hillocks near small lakes, then through the great forest, the *taiga*, of Central Siberia. Gradually it became a conglomeration of a long column of sleighs, mounted men, and small groups marching on foot. Practically all semblance of a regular unit had disappeared. The sleighs and the horses were mostly supplied by the peasants and changed every day or so; the mounts were bought or obtained by barter. The march was uneventful. Small actions against Red guerilla bands here and there, but mostly a dully monotonous trudging on foot, horseback, or in sleighs from early morning till late into the night, combined with patrolling, mounting guard at night, billeting and scouting in the daytime. Once or twice we lost our way in the steppes in the terrible Siberian snowstorms—*burany*—when the whole world seemed to turn into a solid mass of wind-driven snowflakes, blotting out daylight and limiting vision to a few yards.

On a cold December day the regiment was following the narrow hardened strip of the *taiga* road, threading its way between the solemn colonnades of giant firs.

White rabbit-fur caps with earlaps, Kirghiz cowl-shaped *malakhai*, gray army *papakhi* topping short sheepskin coats, long *dokhi* of horse and mountain-goat skins, British soldiers' greatcoats and fur-lined tarpaulin capes made for picturesqueness, but almost completely obliterated the spick and span appearance of which our unit had been so proud only a few weeks before.

Machine guns with cartridge belts drawn through them were perched on platforms on the large sleighs drawn by two horses. Clusters of men on foot and on horseback formed an escort. The men were silent. A few who still had some tobacco were smoking. The *taiga* does not encourage garrulity.

It was still light as my battalion entered a large village, where billetters met their companies and led the men to their assigned *izby*. The night guard service was immediately established, patrols began to move up and down the only street, while strong guard posts with machine guns were placed at both ends of the village.

But for the patrols the village street was completely deserted. The men had had enough of the cold during the day's march and were warming themselves at the large Siberian stoves while their supper was being prepared. The villagers, for their part, apparently felt safer within their homes.

The battalion headquarters were billeted in a large "five-wall" *izba* of a well-to-do peasant, Ignatii Skorov. Our host, a spry military-looking old man with a long gray beard, received his uninvited guests with chilly courtesy.

"What kind of people are you, Captain? There are all sorts marching back and forth these days: Reds, Partisans, Whites, Czechs. Now I hear that at Krasnoiarsk there is a new kind—call themselves Grays. Here, in the *taiga*, it is rather difficult for us to figure this whole thing out."

"We are retreating from the Ural Mountains to Lake Baikal. Our regiment is a part of the White army."

"I watch all these troops marching by—Kolchak's men, Annenkov's troopers, Stchetinkin's partisans—none of them look to me like real soldiers. More like bands of roving brigands."

After a short silence Ignatii resumed: "It's pretty hard on our people. Each band comes to the village and asks for food and horses. We're lucky if they release the sleighs next day; sometimes they drive hundreds of versts with them. And lots of movable property disappears as they pass. Even our girls are sometimes molested."

"Well, it is hard for you people in the villages, but it's not so very easy for us either," I countered. "We've marched day after day without rest since we left Omsk. And there are all kinds of actions to fight—rear guard, night skirmishes at the guard posts, brushes with the partisans. In this damned cold of yours a fellow can't even put a cartridge clip in his rifle magazine without skinning his fingers, the moment he takes his mittens off."

"Why do you go on marching in large groups? Disband, go home, wherever you belong. That's the sensible thing to do, instead of playing at soldiering with all your guard posts and patrols, like a real army."

"Well, Father, it's pretty difficult to disband and shift for oneself

nowadays. The Reds are behind us and there is a guerilla behind every fir-tree. When we move as a unit we have a better chance. The way things are going now you can't get very far without a couple of machine guns, or someone will take the *dokha* off your back before you get clear of a village."

"Sounds reasonable. Didn't think of it that way. In a community one always has a better time than all by oneself."

Our conversation was broken off as the heavy entrance door was thrust open by the men of the patrol, who entered the *izba* stamping heavily to warm their feet.

"The guard at the east side of the village stopped a *troika* that crept up with muffled bells. There were three people in the sleigh. Reported they were Skorov's friends coming for a visit. Said this was party night in the village. Should we bring them in, sir?"

"Right, bring them in."

The three visitors came in, followed by the men of the patrol. One of them stood more than a head taller than the other two. Dark curls, beetling black eyebrows, a short moustache above white teeth. He was dressed quite well, almost like a city-bred man. He had patent leather top-boots, a new black sheepskin coat belted in a military manner, a gray *papakha* rakishly tilted over the right ear. He did not seem to worry at all and calmly saluted our hosts, without paying the slightest attention to the officers.

"Where are you from?"

"Vikhirevo."

"Host, do you know these people?"

"Sure, they are Vikhirevo boys. This fellow is my daughter's intended, Fedor Malykh."

The patrolmen left. The guests took off their sheepskin coats and joined us at the table.

Gradually the *izba* filled with lads and young girls. The men grouped together near the table, while the women crowded in the corner furthest from where we were sitting. Whispers, suppressed chuckles, and the sound of the shelling of small Siberian nuts. But there was a certain tension, and the party was not getting on too well.

The two candles which my orderly brought out from some recess of his saddlebag threw a fitful, uneven yellow light, picking out the faces of the officers and peasants around the table. The group of women in the corner was only faintly outlined, almost entirely swallowed by the darkness. At the oven the young wife of Skorov's son was breathing heavily, moving about the kneading troughs. Children

were darting back and forth. When the door leading to the other half of the house was opened, the women's faces were quaintly outlined by the red light of the burning splinters of resinous wood used by the Siberian peasantry for lighting, because of the shortage of kerosene and candles.

To break the spell of obvious uneasiness and mistrust, I turned to the Signal Officer, Lieutenant Ezhov: "Paul, won't you sing something and cheer up the party?"

Ezhov unbuttoned the tight collar of his khaki tunic, threw back an unruly lock, and his mellow well-trained voice filled the room. The exotic melody of an aria from Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Sadko* sounded, however, out of place and a little forlorn in that rough-hewn *izba* with its low, smoke-begrimed rafters, amidst men dressed in coarse, heavy clothes and oppressed by the cold and darkness of the long Siberian winter night.

The singer soon felt that he had made a mistake in the choice of his song and, without completing it, he changed to the virile old Siberian Cossack stanzas of Ermak, the conqueror of Siberia in the days of Tsar Ivan the Dread.

The men took up the refrain of the old Irtysh lay. Their deep basses modulated, "and thunderbolts rent the sky."

The peasants listened to the old song with obvious relish. This ballad, brought from the shores of the mighty Irtysh to their deep *taiga*, was like a bridge thrown between our men and these woodsmen.

Malykh was looking squarely at Ezhov, leaning his curly head on his arm.

"What do you sing these old songs for?" said he, as Ezhov finished; "Why not try something up to date, like the 'Siberian Jaunting Car'? You know the words, of course:

'Uniforms from England,
Russian shoulder straps,
Japanese tobacco
And a ruler from Omsk.'

This was an obvious insult to us. My impulse was to cut the impudent fellow short, but I thought better of it and merely shifted the pistol holster so that my automatic was handier for a quick reach in an emergency.

Our host took the matter in hand: "Why, there are beautiful old songs. When I served as a sergeant in the Fanagori Grenadiers we

sang far better songs. What you were reciting, Fedor, has no sense and no tune to it—it's just a city couplet."

And he began himself in a clear, slightly cracked voice the old "In the Meadows."

The whole *izba* listened. Even the girls ceased to shell their nuts. This song of things afar still seemed to grip at their emotions. The words, bringing to them the scene of European Russia, its wide meadows, its feathery birch groves, and life in faraway villages, evoked a deep response in both the peasants and our men.

"Yes, that's a fine song," said Ezhov, "a real Russian song, not a city couplet."

"Good songs make good soldiers," remarked Skorov. "In the days of Tsar Alexander, when I was doing my service in the army, things were genuine, the songs as well as the army. Not like now, meaning no offense to you, sirs."

A gallon of moonshine and heavy green glass tumblers appeared on the table.

"And how do you understand these Soviet people." The host turned to me, capping a glass of moonshine with a crust of salted black bread. "What kind of a government is it? We cannot make it out here in the *taiga*. Some say it is the peasants' and workers' government, others say it is a thing called a commune. Some say they are Bolsheviks, others call them Communists. Also about taxation—we don't know what stand they're going to take about that."

"The way I look at it, it's not *our* government—I mean not a Russian government," I said; "instead of a country, they believe in an International. It is a stern government, though, no joke about it."

"We, too, think it's a severe government—perhaps harsher than the White Government was. We are a bit uneasy about the whole thing. Men from Moscow are moving on us, and what are they going to do with our lives? We don't know. What is this International? Is it to replace the Tsar? Something like Kolchak—only Red?"

"What are you talking about, Father," interrupted Malykh. "The International is something for the whole world. The power of the workingmen over the whole world. All men will be like brothers and will live like one nation. There will be no chiefs and no gentlemen. Each one will be his own chief. In a word—a proletarian tsardom."

"And how about God?"

"I've told you time and again there is no God! And we do not need any churches. We've had enough of these parasites in the rectories. It's time we got rid of all the priests."

"How is that? No God? We peasants cannot live without God. You've lived in a city for quite a while and now you're so intelligent you've run away from God. We in the villages can't do that."

We all had another round of moonshine, then Ezhov spoke again about the Soviet Government, about the Village Committees of the Poor, the confiscation of foodstuffs, the Cheka.

The peasants listened with rapt attention. Malykh rolled a cigarette with an air of indifference. Later, however, he also became interested and began to ask questions.

"Do they force the people to serve in the Red army? Now, is it true that they take bread away from the peasants?"

The peasants among our men were also drawn into the argument. In their matter-of-fact, plain peasant way they explained why they had enlisted against the Reds. They spoke about the komissars, the Mobile Food Collecting Columns, the troops of the Cheka, without passion, coolly, and with a great deal of circumstantial detail.

"If I believed half of what you say," exclaimed Malykh, "I'd join you right away."

"Before you live a year, you'll see it with your own eyes," Ezhov came back.

With a little more singing the party broke up.

The next morning our long column of sleighs was winding its way out of the village. The peasants were lining the street, watching us silently pass by.

I thanked our host for his hospitality and gave him a few ounces of tobacco as a parting gift.

"Good luck and a safe road to you, Captain. You can go on now without any fear of trouble. Fedor passed the word to the guerillas not to molest your outfit. If you spoke truly yesternight we shall see you people again here. However, we've got to see this whole thing for ourselves to find out what manner of people these Bolsheviki are."

We shook hands. I mounted my raw-boned gray and started at a trot to gain the head of the column. In a few minutes the solemn rows of firs engulfed the battalion. My adjutant, Kuzmich, joined me. "Well, sir, I venture to suggest that our friend, the curly-headed one, was the local guerilla chieftain. Are we going to see his face again through the sights of a machine gun?"

Two days later we were circling Krasnoïarsk to the north. The cold was even worse than usual. Even our men, inured by months of marching across Siberia, had difficulty in standing the exposure during the long hours of the day's march. Many suffered from frost-

bite and there was very little that could be done about it, as our last medical assistant had left us, deserting to Krasnoiarsk, and taking with him the major part of our medical supplies. One of our officers was completely incapacitated by frostbite on the feet, and we had to carry him to his sleigh as he could not walk at all.

Only two of the horses we had taken with us at Omsk had survived the march. The men apparently stood the march better, but by now we all were longing for a rest at Krasnoiarsk. We hoped to obtain sheepskins and felt boots for all from the army stores, and to rest the men for a few days, so that they could sleep their fill in warm houses and forget for a while about the *taiga*, the ambushes, the guerilla fighting, the night marches at sixty below. Our hopes were all shattered.

As we emerged from the *taiga* south of the Trans-Siberian railway and entered a large village a few miles west of Krasnoiarsk, we were met by our regimental commanding officer. He told me to move the battalion to a village on the Enisei River north of the city instead of marching to Krasnoiarsk, and informed me briefly about the rebellion. The Colonel explained that there was an uprising in Krasnoiarsk, led by the Social Revolutionaries and not by the Bolsheviki. This fact really did not make much difference to us. Whoever started the revolt, it was fairly obvious that there would be no real attempt to recapture the city by the White army, and that, in trying to break through, the army would lose so much, both in morale and men, that it would cease to exist as an armed force to be seriously reckoned with.

As I rode back to the head of the battalion I realized that we were facing, not an orderly retreat but, for most units of the army, something in the nature of a rout. In what direction? Apparently beyond Lake Baikal. In order to reach the lake, the army had still to force a way through the Taishet district infested with guerillas, and the Zima, where according to reports there were large Red irregular bands equal in strength to about two infantry divisions. It was thus problematical whether even a sorry remnant of the army would succeed in reaching the Transbaikalian province.

The men understood the situation pretty clearly. They were morose and kept sullenly silent. On the other hand there were only very few deserters, which, strange to say, included the Commanding Officer of the Ninth Company who had served in the fall as the executive officer of the *Katun*. While on the march the battalion had already lost most of its doubtful elements. Those that remained in the ranks were not likely to desert under any circumstances. Most of them were

peasant volunteers, with a fair sprinkling of city intellectuals—university students and high-school boys. There was of course a chance that the mounted militiamen of Slavgorod and the infantry battalion who had joined forces with us a few weeks before might decide to abandon us, as they were still near their native villages. Most of our own men, however, hailed from districts on the Volga and the Kama and were now thousands of miles away from their homes.

As we moved north of Krasnoiarsk, the villages looked to us almost like cities in comparison with the poor *taiga* settlements we had grown accustomed to of late. It was obvious that the peasants were quite prosperous here. Their horses were well-fed, sturdy animals, and after the change of sleighs at noon we moved at a trot until evening. Had it not been for the wind and cold, it might even have been a pleasure to ride with these fast horses between the shafts through the beautiful open, hilly country.

But the cold spoiled all the fun. Never, as yet, had we been so cold. It was even hard to breathe while walking fast or running to try and warm up. Even the local peasant drivers felt it. As they put it: "Well, sort of chilly today!"

Our men wrapped themselves in any rag they could lay hands on. Those in the sleighs covered themselves with the British army blankets they had received at Omsk.

We stopped for the night in a large village evacuated by the famous Lubkov guerillas just before our billetters reached it. I was quartered in the priest's house, where Lubkov's staff had been located only a couple of hours before my arrival.

As my battalion was responsible for billets the next day, I detailed the Eleventh Company with two heavy machine guns to act as escort to the billeting party. One of the boatswains, Zudin, asked permission to go with the billetters, as his native village was on the Enisei and we were planning to spend the following night there. He was naturally anxious to get there as soon as possible in order to spend some time with his parents, relatives, and friends.

Before going to bed I made the rounds of the guard posts. The proximity of Lubkov's bands called for redoubled vigilance, and any neglect in the guarding of the village might have disastrous consequences. When I returned to the rectory I tried to start conversation with the priest and his wife, but found them very reserved and on their guard. I readily understood why they were so cautious—they knew that we would move out the next morning, leaving the field to the Lubkov guerillas who, very likely, would reoccupy the village.

As usual, I went to bed fully dressed, without even unbuckling my belt with the pistol holster. At three o'clock in the morning I went up to check the posts again and see off the billetters' party with their escort. A strong wind was driving hard dry bits of snow along the ground which pelted one's face very much like hail. It was not as cold as the day before and it even felt as if a thaw were imminent.

The mounted patrol leading the column of billetters was already moving from the church square, which was the place of assembly. The sleighs with platforms carrying the machine guns followed them at a trot, accompanied by the men of the Eleventh Company in sleighs, looking sleepy and dejected.

After accompanying the column on horseback to the village line, I turned back, first speaking to Lieutenant Zorin, who commanded the company. He told me that he intended to ride with the patrol and promised he would not let the men of the escort sleep in their sleighs. I warned him about the glen some five miles from the village as, from descriptions, it was a suitable place for an ambush.

By the time I had made the rounds of the posts and was about to turn in again, the sound of the tocsin pealed by the bell at the church belfry, which was the signal of general alarm, aroused me. I rushed out into the kitchen and sent out orderlies to the companies with orders to fall in in the church square.

The bell kept tolling as I walked to the square. The wind was bringing over the distant rattle of machine guns and the dry whip-like sound of rifle fire. The situation was quite clear. The billeting party had run into an ambush, but as the machine guns kept going—and judging by the sound they were our Colts—the column had not been caught napping and was giving a good account of itself.

The companies were already forming opposite the church. Machine gunners were tending with almost maternal solicitude the black businesslike looking Colts. There was no need to explain to the men what had happened. They were experienced enough to know it all themselves, and that it was up to us to extricate the billetters. Many were yawning sleepily, shivering in the wind.

There was no time to be lost, and we had to move to the rescue immediately. My Adjutant galloped up and reported: "The Colonel orders you to advance immediately. The rest of the regiment will follow, sir."

I gave the order to load rifles and machine guns. The leading patrols went forward at a fast trot and were followed by the dark column of companies. Men's faces were yellow-pale in the semi-darkness.

They listened intently to the rattling of machine guns in the distance, expecting to go into action almost immediately.

The regimental Adjutant came to wish me good luck, shouting the old hunting adage: "Do not bring back fur or feather!"

As we left the village we entered a wide meadow which stretched right to the foot of high hillocks grown with spruce. The sound of rifle fire continued to reach us, sometimes in salvos that sounded like pieces of linen torn asunder, sometimes in isolated, single shots.

It began to snow, and the falling flakes blotted out the pale light of the approaching dawn.

Their rifles slung on bandoliers, the companies marched rapidly in columns, four abreast. A few bullets whizzed past. However, I did not want to deploy the column as the snow was quite deep on both sides of the road and our progress would be considerably delayed should we open up.

A few minutes later we heard the hoofs of a galloping horse and soon the figure of a rider on a heavy horse came in sight on the road in front of us. The leading patrol stopped and unslung rifles. I pulled out my automatic as I was at the head of the column with the patrols.

"Halt! Who goes there?"

There was no answer, but the horse stopped and a couple of men grabbed the bridle. The horseman rolled off and fell into our arms. It was Boatswain Zudin, who had left with the billetters.

"I have a report for you, sir, from Lieutenant Zorin. I had to get through the enemy lines. The billetters were attacked by a guerilla band but are holding their own."

The poor fellow had two bullet wounds, both through the chest. The men of the battalion were angered by the wounding of Zudin. He was a great favorite with the rank and file, who respected his great physical force, equanimity, and coolness under fire.

Leaving two men with Zudin, we moved on as quickly as we could march. In the meantime the sound of firing stopped. Soon our patrols entered the gorge and almost immediately reappeared, accompanied by Lieutenant Zorin.

"I congratulate you, sir, on a successful action," said he. "We inflicted a good thrashing on the Redskins and have captured their entire train, as well as about forty beautiful *dokhi*. At first I thought we were done for. The enemy position was very well chosen and they were numerically greatly superior. I guess there were at least three hundred of them. Did the boatswain succeed in getting through to you with my report?"

Zorin pulled out of his pocket a red flag captured from the enemy. The inscription on the red ground read, "First Detachment of Enisei Bolshevik Guerilla," confirming my thought that guerillas have preference for "first" as a component of their names.

The ambush was quite well organized. The enemy let our column pass their position and opened fire only when its head reached the stockade of fallen trees which barred the road completely. Then they opened fire from both sides of the gully.

Fortunately, our machine gunners replied immediately to the fire, thus giving the escort a chance to leap out of the sleighs and deploy along the road. Zorin sized up the situation quickly and decided to attack the enemy right away, as he thought that it would be very difficult to reload the magazines of the rifles in the cold and that the limited number of cartridges made a lengthy engagement impossible. So bayonets and hand grenades were his only chance, and he took it.

For days to come, the officers of the battalion were diverted by the story of Ezhov's part in the attack. He went on with the charge carbine in hand, firing at the enemy as he went. When he was quite close to the enemy line he wanted to take a pot shot at a guerilla who was aiming at him with an old blunderbuss of some kind. He aimed, pulled the trigger—and nothing happened, as his magazine was empty. He tried to reload, and as his fingers were numb with cold he could not do it. He swore a mighty oath, threw his carbine on the ground, pulled out his pistol and ran forward to find that the enemy had decamped and that the man who aimed at him had been shot by one of our men. For a while the standing joke among the officers of the battalion was that Ezhov would be court-martialed "for loss of government property in the face of the enemy."

The Eleventh Company certainly did a good job. The guerillas did not expect the attack, feeling secure in their great numerical superiority and believing that the column would surrender without a fight. They did not wait for the charge and broke, running into the thick underbrush. A few bodies and the scores of *dokhi* they threw off so as to run faster dotted the hillside. Their train was stationed immediately behind the stockade and was captured by our men. Our spoils included even a gramophone with a set of records.

The losses suffered by us were slight: one seaman had a flesh wound, and the boatswain died from loss of blood.

Having dispatched a report to the Colonel, I moved the battalion toward the next village. The square looked to us like a regular horse fair. It was filled with horses and sleighs. There were at least three

hundred sleighs lined up opposite the church. As we found out later, the Reds had called out peasants with sleighs from the entire district, promising them a share of the plunder they expected to capture from us.

We found the peasants in jocular mood: "The Reds have rounded us up; now the Whites will ride in the sleighs—these Lubkov fellows are certainly great braggarts. Serves them right."

As I heard that peasants from Zudin's village were also in the square with their horses I inquired whether his father was among them. He came to see me in the village mayor's house and I explained to him the circumstances of his son's death.

The old man crossed himself, saying "Eternal memory to him!" but did not shed a tear.

"He was sort of a cut-off slice of bread to us. We hadn't seen him for a long while. A good lad he was, though. Since he went off to join the navy, he never came back home. We heard that the sailors were right on top in Russia and thought Fedor would be a Red komissar by now—and here he is, killed fighting in the White army."

We buried Zudin in the evening, placing in his grave the four crosses he earned during the World War, together with his sword. The young village priest hurriedly read the service for the dead, while our battalion chorus, in hoarse voices and out of tune, sang the prayers of the requiem of the Greek Church. Then the last honor to the fallen—three rifle salvos—and the ceremony was over. The men went to their billets, saying that at least there was the satisfaction that Zudin was buried right in the churchyard of his own village and not left in a shallow hole somewhere in the *taiga* or the steppe. No doubt a good many were thinking "where my own resting place will be."

The elder Zudin bowed low to me: "I thank you for the honor you and your men have done to my son." His wife sobbed wildly and did not want to leave the grave.

The First Battalion took over guard duty from us and we turned in for the night.

SEEDS OF DECAY

OUR regimental Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Pesotskii of the General Staff, formerly director of the Department of Operations of Admiral Kolchak's personal staff, began to behave very strangely after the mutiny of the infantry battalion which had joined our regiment a few weeks before. This event occurred in the beginning of January 1920, a few days after the action against Lubkov's guerillas on the day when we completed our march around Krasnoiarsk and returned to the line of the Trans-Siberian railway.

After learning of the mutiny, Pesotskii lined up the regiment and addressed the men approximately as follows: "At the present stage, it is very difficult to know who is right and who is wrong in this civil struggle. Perhaps the Krasnoiarsk rebels are right, perhaps the guerilla leader Stchetinkin has truth on his side, possibly Admiral Kolchak has the right answer. Under these circumstances, I am not holding you in the ranks of the regiment, and those who want to go to Krasnoiarsk, or to return home, are at liberty to do so. I want with me only those who voluntarily decide to stay with the regiment."

Whatever it was meant to convey, the Colonel's speech produced a very deplorable effect on the men, who had already noticed the desertion of one of the company commanders to Krasnoiarsk. Some of the boatswains and the older naval petty officers, as well as a few of the former members of the *Katun* crew, came immediately after parade and asked to speak to me privately. Their spokesman told me they suspected that some of the officers wanted to leave the men and go to Krasnoiarsk. These men were all volunteers who could not expect any quarter from the Reds, should they be captured.

The machine gunner Krivolapov summed up: "Will you give us your word that you and the officers of your battalion will stay with us to the bitter end and not abandon us under any circumstances?"

I assured them that their suspicions were unfounded, that they had

misunderstood the Colonel, who merely wanted to get rid of all the doubtful elements in the regiment, and that naturally neither I nor any other officers of the battalion had any intention of abandoning them.

The men withdrew, fairly reassured, and promised to do all they possibly could to explain the situation to the rank and file in the light of what I had told them.

Meanwhile, quite a few of the middle-class volunteers—college students, former high-school boys and other city-bred youngsters—began to pack their possessions and leave the village, moving in the direction of Krasnoiarsk. One of their group told me: "We think you're all right, but we have no more faith in the Colonel; we're afraid he will lead us into some trap. We'd rather take advantage of the amnesty proclaimed by the Reds, and hope that in the turmoil now reigning at Krasnoiarsk we shall be able to get away and make our way home."

None of the peasant volunteers, however, followed their example.

During the following days of the march, Pesotskii began to form an officers' company which he recruited from officers of the battalion that had mutinied, from strays that were streaming out of Krasnoiarsk in the hope of escaping east, and those who at one time or another had got separated from the units. I was very much opposed to the formation of such a company, as I felt that my men would inevitably interpret this as a sign of distrust on the part of the Colonel and of his desire to have a sort of pretorian guard to protect himself against his own men. A couple of weeks before, Pesotskii had organized a secret service unit, placing Lieutenant Fedulenko, formerly of the Gendarmerie, in charge, and recruiting it from men formerly connected with the naval counter-espionage service who were scattered throughout the various units of the regiment. This typically Bolshevik idea of organizing a spy system within the regiment was bad enough, but in conjunction with the formation of the officers' company from elements entirely alien it boded no good in a unit like ours largely composed of volunteers who had already been fighting the Reds for a couple of years.

These thoughts of mine I shared with the other commanding officers of battalions as well as with the regimental adjutant. The next day I received the order to hand over to the officers' company ten of my machine guns and to detail fifteen officers of my battalion to serve there. As I had only about twenty-five officers in the four rifle and one machine-gun companies of my battalion, I was extremely upset by the order. The spirit of it was definitely contrary to the understand-

ing I had reached with Pesotskii at Omsk when the regiment was formed. At that time it was agreed that I recruit my battalion myself and also obtain, without any assistance from regimental headquarters, machine guns, equipment, and ammunition. In return for that the Colonel agreed never to call upon me to provide officers and men for the other component parts of the regiment from the ranks of my battalion or to give up to them any machine guns and equipment I might succeed in obtaining. It was, of course, a strange arrangement, but during the Civil War even stranger ones were the order of the day.

After discussing the order with the regimental Adjutant, I informed him that I would give him ten machine guns from the number I obtained at Novo-Nikolaevsk, but would not transfer a single officer, as I needed them in the battalion and simply could not spare them.

The same evening a council of war was called, to be attended by commanding officers of the battalions as well as staff officers of the regiment.

Pesotskii, in opening the council, asked me point blank whether I intended to carry out his order. I answered that I had already delivered the machine guns but that in so far as the officers were concerned I simply could not do without them, and that their transfer would definitely impair the efficiency of the battalion. As it was the only unit in the regiment able to take the field against anything better than a guerilla, I considered it impossible to execute the order, since it deliberately destroyed the fighting efficiency of the regiment.

The rest of the discussion was unbelievable, from the regular military viewpoint, but quite a commonplace in those days of the crumbling White army.

Pesotskii turned to the other members of the council and asked them what they thought of the situation. As far as I can remember none volunteered any suggestions.

He then turned to me again and said: "Do you know what should be done to such units as your battalion?"

By this time I was thoroughly angry: "Certainly, sir. Such gallant units are always rewarded with St. George's banners and ribbons for their bugles"—these being the highest distinctions to which any Russian army unit could aspire in pre-revolutionary days.

Pesotskii turned crimson and shouted: "In the World War such battalions as yours were sent to a hopeless attack, to be wiped out to a man." I saw his hand reaching for the holster.

In my turn I deliberately moved my own holster, and gripping the automatic answered: "Oh, that might have been possible during the World War, but then colonels did not persuade their own men to desert. In the Civil War a battalion would interpret such an order as a signal to turn their bayonets on those who signed it."

For a few tense moments we looked at each other, ready to shoot on the slightest provocation. Then Kolegov, the Deputy Commanding Officer and a close friend of Pesotskii, said: "Well, if you feel so strongly on the subject, we might modify the order. I didn't know you were short of officers; I thought your naval boatswains and chief petty officers were at least as good as the army ensigns."

The other officers of the regiment did not learn what occurred at the war council. They sensed, however, the tension between the Colonel and myself and interpreted it in different ways. Some of the temporary officers, coming from Siberian provinces, figured it out as a desire on my part to supersede the Colonel, and came to see me at night to tell me I could count on the support of practically all the officers of the other battalions, should I decide to declare the Colonel a traitor and have him arrested. Probably that was the logical thing to do under the circumstances. However, I was at the time still too much of a regular naval officer to arrest my own Colonel. I merely told my visitors that they were mistaken and that the Colonel was all right and I, for one, was not going to do anything against him, and advised them very strongly not to make any move in that direction themselves, as I would bring out my men to stop it.

A couple of days after the council took place, the Colonel changed the order of march. He took command of the vanguard consisting of the officers' company, some hundred and twenty strong, of the mounted scout troop of perhaps fifty sabers, and the headquarters company of roughly sixty men. My battalion followed, while the two others with the Slavgorod mounted militia detachment formed the rear guard and threw out a protective screen of patrols to guard against an attack from the rear.

The regiment was strung out for some twenty miles along the road following the track of the Trans-Siberian railway. We were approaching the station Uk. My battalion stopped for the night at a small village close to a railway station and I was billeted at the school marm's house. My landlady was quite a radical, and I spent an hour or so in a political argument with her. The conversation was interrupted by a call of one of the volunteers of the mounted scouts, a young man of good family, extremely erratic and scatterbrained, who spent about

half an hour telling me that all the officers and men of the regiment had a great deal of respect for me and hoped that I would assume command of the regiment. I terminated the interview, telling him that I hoped he did not mean any disrespect to Colonel Pesotskii. The volunteer went off to his detachment, leaving me wondering about the real reason for his visit.

My Adjutant, who joined me at supper, told me that the Rumanian officer in command of the detachment of troops policing that section of the Trans-Siberian railway on behalf of the Allies was apparently a decent fellow quite friendly to the White Russians. I decided to go and see him and try to find out how the situation was with the trains and escort of Admiral Kolchak which were supposed to be at Nizhne-Udinsk only a few score miles from where we were; also to ascertain whether the remainder of the White army had succeeded in breaking through at Krasnoiarsk, since I had no authentic information concerning its fate.

The Rumanian Captain and his Russian wife received me very courteously in the converted *teplushka* they were occupying. I learned that Admiral Kolchak with his escort was still at Nizhne-Udinsk, but that the situation there was very tense, as large groups of irregular Red troops were in the vicinity. As to the army, Kappel was in command and the vanguard of his troops was only some fifty miles west of the station. The Rumanian officer was unable to say how many had succeeded in passing Krasnoiarsk. In his opinion, while the units were in bad shape, there were still at least twenty thousand armed men under Kappel's orders. This bit of news cheered me up as I did not expect that so many could have escaped the Krasnoiarsk disaster.

At my request the Captain called up Nizhne-Udinsk on the direct wire and asked to have me connected with Admiral Kolchak's headquarters. After lengthy negotiations, the Rumanian officer informed me that the Czech Commandant at the station of Nizhne-Udinsk refused permission for me to communicate with anyone on Kolchak's staff. I thanked him and requested him to pass word, if at all possible, to Kolchak's staff that my battalion had arrived and that the Admiral could count on us in any emergency.

Upon returning to my billet, I sent for two young naval officers, told them to take off their uniforms and dress in "civvies" as I wanted them to go to Nizhne-Udinsk along the railway tracks, by sleigh as far as possible, then on foot, if necessary. After reaching Nizhne-Udinsk they were to try to get in touch with Lieutenant Commander

Trubchaninov, Kolchak's aide, or Commander Buturlin, his personal staff officer, explain to them fully the situation with respect to the Naval Regiment and ask them to inform the Admiral that I urged him to wait for the regiment and then move either to Mongolia or towards Kappel's forces; that my men would fight under any circumstances for him and that I expected to have no difficulty in neutralizing the Czech battalion occupying Nizhne-Udinsk.

The two youngsters were very keen to carry out their mission, and went off immediately to get ready for the expedition, promising to start at sunrise.

The next morning we were moving in a column four abreast, with our sleigh train following (it was impossible, in these villages along the railway, to obtain the necessary number of horses to carry the entire regiment in sleighs). I rode at the head of the column. As we approached the village which we knew had been occupied during the night by our regimental headquarters, we saw several of our billeters on horseback and in sleighs led by a Sub-Lieutenant, galloping towards us and shouting at the top of their voices. I spurred my horse and galloped out to meet them. I heard them shouting: "The officers' company have mutinied! They have arrested the Colonel and the regimental staff. They've hoisted the red flag, and the mounted scouts have joined them!"

When the men of the battalion heard that colossal piece of news they reacted to it in a most unexpected fashion. They thought it was the greatest joke ever. "Officers in mutiny! Flying the red flag! Ha! Ha! And we, bluejackets, will have to save the Colonel from the officers. The Reds will never believe *that* tale, if it ever comes to their ears!" Their guffaws reached homeric proportions.

I called for silence in the ranks, brought several machine guns to the van of the column, threw out two mounted patrols and began to move on the village, detaching one company with four machine guns to occupy a height which, according to the accounts of the billeters, overlooked the village square. I also sent word to the rear guard requesting the Slavgorod militia to move around the village and occupy the eastern exit.

When we were again on the march, one of the mounted scouts galloped out from the village and seemed to be very surprised when I pointed my automatic at him, ordered him to dismount and placed him under arrest. He was obviously sent out as an agitator and had not supposed that I already knew about the events in the village, as the billeters had managed to get away without attracting attention to

their departure. He loudly proclaimed his innocence, but I told him to keep quiet unless he wanted to be dealt with on the spot.

Upon reaching a convenient position dominating the village, I deployed two of the rifle companies as well as the machine-gun company, keeping one in reserve, and sent my best officer, an intrepid and brilliant man, Lieutenant Zakharchenko, with two volunteers under the flag of truce to the C.O. officers' company, with an ultimatum to deliver within thirty minutes the Colonel, his staff, and all those who desired to follow him. The alternative was an immediate attack and the execution of all members of his force, without the formality of a court-martial.

Before the appointed time had expired, a small column of mounted men and sleighs emerged from the village and moved up the road in our direction. I could soon distinguish through my field glasses that the Colonel was leading the group, followed by his Adjutant and the rest of the regimental staff.

Lining up the reserve company along the road, I placed myself on its right flank, and as the Colonel approached the company presented arms and I made a formal report as if nothing untoward had happened:

"Sir, the Third Battalion consisting of twenty-six officers and four hundred and twenty other ranks is occupying an initial position for the attack of the village occupied by the mutineers and awaits your further orders."

Pesotskii simply shook me by the hand, dismounted, and indicated that he wanted to speak to me privately. He briefly explained the events of the morning, telling me that the officers' company had even trained some machine guns (I heard later they were the very machine guns that my battalion had handed over at the Colonel's orders) on the *izba* occupied by the regimental H.Q., their spokesman declaring that they were tired of the war, would not leave the village, and were sending delegates to the local Red guerilla leader to signify their wish to negotiate with him.

Having explained the disposition I had taken, I suggested that we move on the village without delay and that upon capturing it a court-martial should be appointed from among the officers of my battalion and all the ringleaders executed on the spot, the rest disarmed and chased out of the village, and their possessions divided among the men of the regiment.

Pesotskii listened as I outlined my plans, twisting his right moustache with a gloved hand.

"I think it would be utterly inadvisable to attack the officers' company and to execute their ringleaders. The White army would be shocked by the news that officers were executed by bluejackets, and we shall gain the reputation of Cains. These officers are tired, disillusioned men. Let them be: the Red guerillas will make short work of them anyhow. Please move your battalion five miles west of the village and establish strong posts to guard against a possible guerilla attack. We will discuss the whole situation at a war council this evening."

I remonstrated with the Colonel, telling him that letting the mutinous officers go scot-free would break our regiment's morale. If the men were allowed to think that officers could mutiny unpunished, all sense of discipline would disappear, and the only way for him to reestablish his authority was by showing unmistakably that a mutiny was always mercilessly crushed.

Pesotskii shook his head and merely repeated his order to retreat.

As I told the companies to form into a column again and to march west to the village we had passed a couple of hours before, signs of discontent became clearly visible.

"Are we afraid of these officer-mutineers, or what? These Colonel's pets are going to make fun of us ever after. We ought at least to tear their shoulder straps off."

In the evening the Colonel called a war council. We assembled in the small room of the ramshackle *izba* he was occupying.

"Gentlemen," began Pesotskii, "in the first place I want to acquaint you with most momentous news. I have just learned from the Rumanian staff that Admiral Kolchak and his retinue have placed themselves under the protection of the Allies and are proceeding to Irkutsk under the escort of a Czech guard. The Admiral has passed the Supreme Command to General Semenov."

We were all stunned by the impact of this announcement.

"Next, I want to advise you that in view of the obvious lack of confidence in me by the regiment, I have decided to give up my command, and, jointly with Colonel Kolegov, to accept the hospitality the Rumanian staff has offered me. I therefore place before you three courses of action: first, the regiment may disarm and place itself under the protection of the Rumanian troops; second, the men disband and the officers accept the hospitality of the Rumanian troop trains; third, you continue as an armed unit under the command of an officer enjoying the confidence of the officers and men of the regiment."

According to regulations governing councils of war the junior in rank present had to offer his opinion first. It fell accordingly to my lot to offer my suggestions before any other officers present.

Admiral Kolchak's surrender—and I immediately interpreted it as such—was a terrible blow to me personally and undoubtedly to all other naval officers present. Whatever our opinion of him as a political leader, regardless of what we thought of his capability as a military chief in the field, he was to us the embodiment of what was best in the White movement, its Chevalier Bayard, a man of the highest ideals, of great personal courage, and our chief, to whom we owed allegiance. Semenov I regarded as a rather shady adventurer, whose problematic patriotism was grafted on lust for power at any price, lack of ethics and greed for money. It was impossible for me to accept him as a leader of the White movement and I knew that most of the naval officers in the regiment and a large number of men felt as I did. I did not, however, consider that we should give up without an attempt to help Kolchak out of the predicament he obviously was in, while the idea of surrender of arms to Rumanians who, after all, were from my viewpoint only foreign intruders on Russian soil, was entirely repugnant to me. At the same time, I considered Pesotskii by far the ablest infantry leader among us and also one exceedingly well informed about local Siberian conditions, to which all of us naval officers were entire strangers.

Urged by these considerations, I addressed the council rather impetuously and said: "As long as Admiral Kolchak is alive, it is our obvious duty to remain under arms and try to help him jointly with the other units of the White army approaching us from the direction of Krasnoiarsk. The very thought of disarming and of surrendering to the Rumanians is entirely unacceptable to me. We should continue as a regiment and should move further east in the hope that later the tide will turn and we shall be able to strike another blow for the White movement. As to your plan to abandon the command of the regiment, I cannot regard it as anything but a wish to desert your post, and in my opinion a deserter is a deserter, be he a private in the ranks or a colonel in command. I, for one, will take all the steps I can to prevent this. With respect to your remarks as to lack of confidence, we are not in 1917, and in a regular army or navy unit no such question can possibly arise. As long as the commanding officer performs his duty, officers and men are bound to obey him, regardless of their personal opinion. This is the ABC of military discipline, and I really do not see that it is necessary to dwell further on the point. I propose

therefore, that you retain the command of the regiment and that the regiment continue under arms as a part of the White army or what remains of it."

All the officers present seconded my views.

Pesotskii then turned to me and asked: "Who will guarantee that all my orders with regard to marches and fighting will be carried out? Two mutinies, one after another—first that infantry battalion, and today the officers' company—do not offer any auspicious omens as to the future behavior of the men."

As all present remained silent it was obviously up to me to offer a solution.

"In the first place I want to point out that none of the fighting component parts of the Naval Regiment itself has ever refused duty or mutinied. Only units that joined us, such as the infantry battalion, or those formed by you from waifs and strays, have proved so far to be turncoats. Secondly, I am prepared to guarantee to you that any battle order given by you will be faithfully executed."

"Very well," answered Pesotskii, "under these circumstances I agree to retain my command and you will have my marching orders within an hour. We shall move up the Chuna River, cross the Chuna *taiga*, and then follow the Angara from Bratskii Ostrog."

This plan did not appeal to me at all. I knew enough of the local geography to realize that the route led through some of the most thinly populated districts of Central Siberia and that there was no road across the Chuna *taiga* to Bratskii Ostrog, the ancient log fort built by the Cossack conquerors of Siberia as an outpost against the warlike Buriats. I made, therefore, a counter suggestion: to stay where we were until the remnants of the White army joined us, and then to march in their van under the command of General Kappel.

The Colonel looked sarcastically at me and remarked: "Didn't I hear you a few minutes ago guaranteeing faithful execution of my marching and battle orders?"

There was no choice for me but to shrug my shoulders. "All right, we march to Chuna, although I do not see any sense in it."

Even today I do not clearly understand why Pesotskii decided to march north through some of the most difficult terrain in Siberia where it obviously was difficult to feed the regiment, instead of waiting for Kappel to join us. Kolegov told me later, as we were entering the *taiga*, that Pesotskii was afraid that marching with the army would mean lack of conveyances and difficulty in obtaining shelter and food, as the villages along the railway were not in a position to

victual or to accommodate such a large number of men. Whether this was his true motive or whether he contemplated even at that time going over to the Reds, I am unable to say. Once he told me, "Intelligent general staff officers do not plod for long on foot or on horseback. They usually ride in comfortable private cars on railroad trains, where they can live like men and not like the beasts of the forest." And at that time it was obvious that for the general staff officers of the White army the chances of riding in a private car were very remote.

TAIGA

A FEW days after the mutiny of the officers' company the battalion which I commanded was making camp for the night on a high bluff topped by a clump of tall Norwegian pines.

The bright flames of the campfires, fed with resinous logs, gilded the red masts of the trees which stood in serried ranks around the camp, like the columns of some archaic temple. The deep January snow, unsullied by man, crackled crisply underfoot as the marines broke through the crust formed after a recent thaw. Kettles were set to boil, shelters of pine logs and young trees were built, and the blades of axes rang glassily in the cold, dry air. The sleighs with the baggage train, the sick and the wounded, were still struggling up the slope of the bluff, along the narrow path made slippery by the iron sleigh-runners that had preceded them. Drivers were shouting vociferously at their tired horses and calling on the infantry escort to help them pull the sleighs up the steep incline.

The camp, like any other camp, was full of the usual humdrum activity. Men were joking about the slippery path to the spring or cooking their scanty rations in a quiet businesslike way. Horses were feeding from nosebags. It was hard to realize that this was the first pause in a reckless adventure, such as no Russian army unit had ever undertaken since the sturdy Cossacks swept over Siberia in their quest for rare pelts—and added an empire to Moscovia.

We had spent the previous night in a small village on the Chuna, a mere cluster of ten or twelve *izby* inhabited by a clan of tall, blond trappers. Between it and Bratskii Ostrog, on the Angara, lay sixty miles of virgin *taiga*, including several rivers and two ridges to be crossed, according to our ten-verst-to-the-inch map, which later proved to be extremely optimistic as to distances in the *taiga*. We had with us four days' rations for men and horses, and that on a very limited scale—no meat, no sugar, only bread, a little sun-dried fish and

the prospect of eating some of our horses. The villages on the Chuna were so poor and the peasants had so little food that we could not collect more than this scanty store without exposing the inhabitants to famine.

The battalion had started at seven in the morning and had marched the whole day with only one hour's rest for a hasty meal of tea and bread. The snow on the path was trampled by the mounted men of a regiment which had preceded us the day before with the regimental headquarters. It was nearly midnight, and our rear guard was not yet in camp. The net result of a long day's march was only about twelve miles.

Kuzmich, the battalion Adjutant, had a wound in the palm of his hand which, in the intense cold of the Siberian winter, refused to heal and was gradually sapping his strength. His usual optimism was colored by it, and at this moment he was worrying about the horses.

"I don't believe they'll survive the *taiga*, sir. We can give them very little hay and no oats to speak of, and it's hard going in the forest over the stumps and underbrush. The Ninth Company had to kill two of their horses that went lame crossing that devilish *pal** we just came through."

"No use worrying, Kuzmich. Besides, I suspect the men were hungry and thought a little horseflesh soup would be a pleasant change. How about our mounted patrol we left at the village to wait for the other battalions? Has it caught up?"

"No, sir, not yet. Can't understand what happened to it."

My smart and industrious orderly, Semen, had supper ready—a tinful of steaming horseflesh soup he got from the Ninth Company, two slices of black bread and a pot of boiling hot tea. I sat down on my Cossack saddle and fell to it.

After the meal I mounted the heavy raw-boned gray that had survived the privations of the winter march and carried me from Novo-Nikolaevsk to the Chuna. As I rode down the bluff to inspect the field posts and patrols, I met the officer we had left at the village to establish contact with the other battalions.

"Grave news to report, sir. I sent out one of my men to meet the battalions on the march, about an hour after you left. He did not return. I then sent out the two others, warning them to be careful and keep a watchful eye for the Red guerillas. I waited some three hours. As they did not return, I set out myself. After riding about four miles

* A tract of land on which trees whose roots have been burned by underground forest fires are lying in a tangled mass.

I reached that deep gully in the wood which you probably remember, and found dead horses and broken sleighs lying in heaps on the road. As I drew nearer I found quite a number of bodies of officers and men of the First Battalion. They had apparently been ambushed by the Red partisans, who had bombed them as they entered the gully and then shot them from ambush."

The news staggered me. It meant that both the other battalions of our regiment were wiped out. My battalion and the mounted men who accompanied the regimental headquarters were all that was left of the Naval Regiment.

"Better keep quiet about the news," said I. "No use letting the men know about it. They have enough to contend with as it is."

Some of the officers of the other battalions were among my best friends. Rakint, who commanded the First, had taken over the destroyer *Strashnyi* from me at Reval in 1917; Stadnitskii-Kolendo, his Adjutant, was my old shipmate; Sokolov, the Adjutant of the Fourth, was a Naval Guardsman whom I knew quite well through my association with that regiment.

The campfires seemed less bright, the ring of the axes less cheerful. Even two years of civil war had not made me immune to human emotion.

Next morning I woke up shortly after daybreak. We were not provided with tents or sleeping bags. I slept in a sleigh, wrapped in two of the British army blankets with which Madame Rodzianko had so kindly provided us at Omsk. Some straw around the feet, and a heavy muffler wrapped above my earlapped cap, completed my bedding accoutrement. On waking I felt so benumbed and stiff that I could not get up, and had to roll out on the snow. Then I managed to scramble to my feet. After a few minutes' violent exercise the blood began to circulate, and I could approach the fire and drink a cup of hot tea. The camp began its morning activities. Horses were led to the spring, then fed and harnessed. The sick and wounded were packed tightly in sleighs and covered with hay and blankets.

The experience of the previous day had taught us several things about marching in the *taiga*. As soon as they had finished breakfast, I dispatched Kuzmich and some sixty men, equipped with saws and axes, to cut a path. The rest of the battalion I sent off in three echelons, timing their departure at intervals of one half hour. This, I thought, would save the companies from constantly making up on each other on the narrow winding path when the head of the column was delayed by heavy underbrush or tangled trunks of fallen trees.

Leaving a few mounted men to cover our rear, I rode ahead and joined Kuzmich with his work detail. The marines were taking turns at intensive work with axe or saw, as our tool box was sadly inadequate. The men were hard at work, but still had time to crack a joke or two. Krivolapov, the burly Kama peasant, bred in the woods, who had made the Irtysh campaign with me, was teasing a slim youngster who handled his axe very clumsily.

"What do you think it is—a comb? or a hair-brush? Get down to it, man!"

The young marine, a mere school-boy, still weak from a recent attack of typhus, took the razzing good-naturedly, and Krivolapov proceeded to show him how to use the axe.

By way of good example, I joined the work detail. Krivolapov handed me a two-handed saw, and we set to work on an enormous pine trunk that obstructed the path. I had not quite lost the knack of handling a saw, and was happy to have some intense physical exercise to keep me from thinking of the bad news of the night before.

We made fair progress until we struck a large *pal* covered with a welter of century-old trees, sprawling in every direction. Krivolapov went ahead with a few men to find out the shortest cut across it. His woodcraft was superior even to that of the Siberian trappers, as he had worked as a timber cruiser up north and felt quite at home in any forest. When he returned, we learned that we should have to cut through about a mile and a half of fallen trees since it would be impracticable to try to go around the *pal*. I sent for men from the other detachments to relieve the work detail. It took us four hours of intensive work to cut a path through that maze of treetrunks.

When we were out of the *pal* and began to ascend a ridge, sparsely covered with Norwegian pines, I told Krivolapov to take Kuzmich's horse and come with me to look for a good camping place for the night.

"It's getting colder, sir," said Krivolapov; "listen how the trees are cracking."

Crossing the ridge, we struck a fairly well-cleared path with many primitive traps set along it. I looked for some sign of animal life, but the *taiga* was dead. Not a bird or animal of any sort. After riding for about two hours we came to a small clearing with a dugout hut sheltered by a steep bluff.

"This is the Chuna trappers' shelter," said Krivolapov. "The old men in the village told me they never set traps beyond this shelter. He also said we were fools to try to cross the *taiga* with our sleighs."

"What else did the old devil tell you? That the ravens would pick our bones, or something equally cheerful?"

"Well, sir, they thought we'd never get through and would have to go back to Chuna, or die of cold and hunger. Even the red guerillas—local Siberian people—never tried to cross the Chuna *taiga* in winter," he added, as an afterthought.

"Well, at least the dugout will serve as an excellent shelter for our sick tonight."

We found a small spring within a couple of yards of the shelter and cleared a path to it. Then we started a big roaring fire, Siberian fashion, placing two dry tree trunks at an open angle and piling timber and brushwood a yard high on top of them. As soon as the fire was going strong, we took off our sheepskin coats and felt boots and indulged in the luxury of thoroughly warming ourselves and drying our boots and socks.

"It would be great if we could get a mountain goat, sir. Horseflesh isn't much to my liking. The Tatars may like their *makhan*,* but it's no food for Christians!"

When the echelons arrived, I passed word to bring our sick into the hut. We had with us about thirty officers and men down with typhus. We did not dare to leave them behind for fear of the Red guerillas who would have made short work of them. So we brought them along with us. Strange to say, very few of them died, despite the hardships of the march, unsuitable food, and the extreme cold to which they were exposed.

Next morning I woke up while it was still dark and found Krivolapov preparing a horseflesh stew at the fire we had started together the previous evening.

"Two men in the Tenth Company died," said he. "One of the Chuna peasants who came with his horse to carry the sick also died. It was a cold night."

The Captain of the Tenth Company soon came to confirm the news. I told him to detail men to dig graves and to make wooden crosses.

When the battalion was ready to leave camp, I went with Kuzmich to the graves and read the burial service. A dozen men stood bare-headed and in hoarse voices sang "Memory Eternal." We put some heavy boulders over the graves to preserve the bodies from the claws of wild animals and, crossing ourselves, went to join the battalion.

* Horseflesh broth.

"Not a bad end," I mused, "to die of heart failure from exposure. The end comes in their sleep and there is no suffering."

Kuzmich apparently guessed my thoughts.

"It's hard, sir, for these Volga boys—so far from home. Their people will never know where they died. And only the winter winds to sing their funeral masses, till a bear or a wolf gets at their bones."

There were only a few *paly* on our path that day, and none of them as bad as we had met the day before. We found, however, that the next ridge was much steeper than the first, and was covered by a thick growth of young firs, through which we had to cut a way for the sleighs. The descent was particularly difficult. The first sleighs got down without any particular trouble, but as soon as the snow on the path became slippery from the pressure of the iron-shod runners, the real fun started. The heavily laden sleigh would slide down on the horse. The horse would stampede downhill and get hopelessly tangled in the fir growth, or run into the sleigh ahead and start it going at a breakneck pace. Several sleighs were upset and broken, harness torn and passengers scattered in the snow. We had to space the sleighs at considerable distances and detail six men to each sleigh to keep it from over-running the horse.

At the foot of the ridge we ran into another obstacle. A swift mountain torrent was free of ice, in spite of the intense cold. We had to build a bridge across it, as an attempt to ford it in such weather would certainly have meant the loss of many horses and probably some men. With no tools other than axes and saws at their disposal, our Kama woodsmen accomplished miracles. Within a couple of hours, without nails and with only a few bits of rope, they had made a sixty-foot bridge, using snow to fill the spaces between the trunks of young trees of which it was constructed. Our sleighs were taken over with only one or two mishaps. We built roaring fires on the other side, so that the men who got wet building the bridge or taking the horses and sleighs over could be properly warmed and dried.

Late that afternoon I saw that a number of trees had been blazed. I followed the trail and came upon a large blaze on a pinetree. As I came nearer I read a message from the Colonel, traced in indelible pencil:

"The Chuna peasants were wrong about distance. Our map also wrong. Scouts that succeeded in reaching end of *taiga* report it forty miles from here at least. Be guided accordingly. Am pushing on."

It was already getting dark and even the head of the column would not make up on me before ten. This meant that the tail of our long

straggling train would not come up till one in the morning or later. It was impossible to try to go any further. The horses and men would be unable to stand the strain. At the same time, we had food and forage for one day only. Even with the best of luck, we could not expect to make more than twenty miles the next day, which meant that the other twenty miles would have to be made on entirely empty stomachs, and, more serious still, the horses would not even get a pound of oats. I doubted whether they would be able to make the distance with our heavily laden sleighs.

There was still another eventuality. The village at the exit from the *taiga* might be occupied by Red guerillas, if the Colonel's forces had not been sufficient to capture it. In which case we should have to get along for at least another twelve hours without food.

I rode back to join my chum, Lieutenant Zakharchenko, in whose judgment I had the greatest confidence.

"What do you make of it, Zakharchenko?" I asked, giving him the substance of the Colonel's message and adding that I had destroyed it as soon as I had read it.

"I think we must try to push forward tomorrow as far as possible, and early the next morning send a few men on our best horses to find out where the Colonel is and get some forage and food from the villages beyond the *taiga*. We shall have to leave our baggage behind, perhaps even the sick and wounded, in case our people have not been able to occupy these villages, and push ahead as fast as we can to help them."

The plan was obviously the best possible under the circumstances. I rode back to the head of the column. To my surprise I found that some men of the Ninth Company, which was recruited from the ship's company of the gunboat *Katun* which I had commanded on the Irtysh, had built me a very substantial shelter of young fir trees. In spite of the shelter I had considerable difficulty in getting any sleep that night. My eyelids were sore from the acrid smoke of the campfires, my ears were badly frostbitten in spite of the earlaps of my fur cap, and the problems of the next two days weighed heavily on my mind.

Next morning there was more bad news. Another Chuna peasant and three of our men had died. Another hurried burial, and a few more white, axe-hewn crosses in the *taiga*.

It was getting too cold to ride for a long stretch. So I left my horse with Semen and walked ahead with Krivolapov and Kuzmich. The path led over deep gullies overgrown by enormous Siberian cedar-

trees and firs. The snow lay deep and the pale morning light scarcely penetrated the dense green canopy overhead, so that we were making our way almost in complete darkness. It was the forest of a Russian fairy tale, where one might suddenly meet the lean Kastchei, or the Baba Iaga or some other fantastic creature of Russian folklore.

For a while the path led along a small frozen stream, and we found spoors of mountain goats, foxes, and hares. Soon we reached a bluff from which we could overlook several miles of *taiga*. It was a remarkable and awe-inspiring sight. Beneath us, as far as the eye could see, there stretched an ocean of green. The treetops were blended in a solid, smooth surface, broken here and there into long, running waves, as the great firs and pines bent their stately heads before the wind. For a few moments we stood gazing across the vast expanse, straining our eyes to see a wisp of smoke in the direction where we expected the Colonel and his men might camp.

It was already getting dark when we found another set of blazings and a second message from the Colonel. "Village on fringe of *taiga* occupied by Red guerillas in force. Shall need your help to capture it."

So our worst anticipations were realized. Our men were still in the *taiga* and unable to dislodge the Reds from the village.

We looked for a suitable camping place and succeeded in finding a spring. We noticed, however, that there was very little dry brushwood, and practically no dry treetrunks. That augured badly for our campfires, and it was getting colder and colder every hour. By now, the temperature was so low that any violent exercise was painful. We were lucky in not having encountered any *paly* that day, as it would have been a very slow process for our exhausted men to cut their way through in such intense cold. They had difficulty even in breathing when they attempted to warm themselves by running. Our only comfort was that we had faced the worst of the *taiga* while our energies were still fresh and the temperature still bearable.

We built our fires of green wood and every scrap of dry brush that could be found. They gave out clouds of smoke and very little warmth. The men were tired and dispirited. These four long days of marching in the *taiga*, the gloomy silence of the endless forest, the ever increasing cold had worn them down. Their usual good-natured gaiety had gone and they were sullen and moody.

After supper, Zakharchenko, Kuzmich, and I had another council of war. It was agreed that the best plan would be to send out early in the morning all the officers of the battalion and as many non-coms as we could mount, with two Lewis guns, to join the Colonel and help him

capture the village on the fringe of the *taiga*. The rest of the battalion were to start later, leaving the baggage sleighs behind, but bringing along the sick and wounded, a small quantity of ammunition, and four Colt machine guns. I did not expect that the advance party would be able to capture the village next day, and thought that the battalion would have to camp again in the *taiga*.

That night, for the first time, I was unable to sleep at all. I stayed near a small fire which I kept going with bark and small twigs of pine. It covered me with soot as completely as if I had been suspended to a rafter in a smoke-house. My felt boots were wet and refused to dry properly, and I was so cold that even hot tea failed to warm me.

The morning roll call was very early, while it was still dark. Most of the men had not slept and had spent the night shivering beside miserable little fires. Many were suffering badly from frostbitten feet and were unable to walk. They dragged themselves on knees and elbows to the sleighs. And there was nothing we could do for them. Twelve men had died during the night, including one of our best machine-gun sergeants, who had fought through the Civil War since June 1918.

Kuzmich went around quietly and told the officers to saddle their horses. He then picked out some non-coms to accompany them on their dash for the village.

Thin spirals of pale gray smoke from the campfires were rising to the treetops as the morning sun gilded the tall shafts of pines and awakened myriads of tiny bright diamonds on the frozen crust of snow.

There was no breakfast to be cooked that morning, since the battalion had no more food to cook. The men were gnawing at crusts of frozen bread. Kettles of water were boiling over the embers of the dying fires.

Half an hour later the mounted group of officers and non-coms was filing past, each saluting with a mittened hand raised to the queer fur headgear acquired on the march from Omsk. Soon the towering *taiga* had swallowed horses and men.

The top sergeants came to me for orders. We went over the sleigh train and selected those necessary for the transport of the sick and wounded. Then the companies were lined up. Shivering in the bright sunlight reflected by the snow, the men were looking at me with rheumy, red-rimmed eyes. It seemed to me that their spirit was completely broken.

"By companies, Tenth leads, march!"

Ragged coats, heads wrapped in tattered *bashlyki*, faces black with campfire soot—there was nothing martial in the appearance of the battalion. The leading company was abreast of me as the men raised a cheer, and it ran down the wearily trudging column like the howl of hungry wolves. There was an eeriness about that cheer from starved, half-frozen men that was unforgettable. It gripped my heart with an icy claw and sent cold shivers down my spine.

As they passed the men turned their faces toward me. I felt a new confidence in them, in their spirit. The terrible days and nights in the *taiga* had not broken them. They were not a mob, they were still fighting men.

For hours we trudged doggedly along. The ground was much easier than on previous stages of the march. There were no *paly*, and the growth was less dense. The sleighs were able to go through without much work on the part of the men. Only here and there was it necessary to cut down a young tree or two. On the whole we were making better progress than on any previous day. I blessed fate for that. Had we encountered on that day the great *paly*, like those we had had to cross on the second day of our march, we should not have had the strength to fight our way through their tangled maze.

We did not stop for the midday meal. It was important to cover as much ground as possible by daylight. Also we could not spare any of our horses for food. They were all needed to haul the heavily loaded sleighs.

The sun was already setting when a frantic cheer went up from the men in the van of our straggling file.

In a few moments Kuzmich and Krivolapov were at my side.

"It was a good thing we rode ahead this morning, sir," said Kuzmich. "We found the Colonel and his men on the edge of the *taiga*. As they had no machine guns with them, they felt diffident about attacking the Reds in the village. Our two Lewis guns did the trick."

Kuzmich brought with him sleighs with hay and oats for our horses. Several large loaves of bread for each company were also forthcoming. Rations were served to man and beast, and after a short rest we moved on to the village.

It was quite dark as we entered the tiny hamlet half a mile from the fringe of the *taiga*. The wounded and sick were placed in two of the *izby* reserved for them. The rest of us crowded pell-mell into the others. The Colonel's men were mounting guard.

That sleep on the earthen floor of the *izba* was a great boon. To feel warm, to be free of the pangs of hunger, to be able to wash face and

hands—all this was untold luxury. For the moment all worries about the future were forgotten, all thought of the possibility of a counter attack by the Reds was laid aside. We felt that we had reached the end of our weary trail and that the road to Irkutsk would seem just a joy-ride, along the swift Angara lined with prosperous villages, untouched by the ravages of civil war. All the food we wanted, enough fodder to feed our horses back to sleekness—and then Irkutsk.

The dark, silent terror of the *taiga* was behind us. Was there still greater danger ahead? We did not care. Until late into the next morning we slept the happy, dreamless sleep of exhausted men who at last had reached a safe haven.

END OF THE NAVAL REGIMENT

B_Y THE time we emerged from the *taiga*, the forces of the regiment were badly depleted. Two battalions had perished entirely, my battalion had lost many men from exposure, several men were incapacitated by severe frostbite. Our horses were in a sorry state, the men were tired and dispirited. The crossing of the *taiga* was tantamount to a lost battle in its physical and moral effects. Units belonging to the Second Bratskii Irregular Red Division were occupying Bratskii Ostrog. To get to the road following the Angara we had to pass under their fire.

To my surprise, as I woke up after a heavy sleep the first night we were out of the *taiga*, in the village occupied on the previous day by our vanguard, I learned that Pesotskii had entered into negotiations with the guerilla leaders at the Ostrog and that the latter had agreed to let us pass unmolested providing we moved past them in small groups, so that they would be certain that we did not intend to attack them suddenly.

This undoubtedly was the psychological breaking point. Until then we had been divided from the Reds by an impassable line. From now on we were in constant touch with them. While we passed the Ostrog in small groups the leaders of the Red troops counted our men, figured out how many machine guns we had, and what supplies of ammunition we were carrying. As we began to move along the Angara River small Red patrols marched ahead of us, always in sight of our guard posts, and another group of Reds followed quite closely upon our heels. From that moment on we really were a group of prisoners, still armed, it is true, but moving under escort of the Reds. On that day I realized that Lieutenant Fedulenko, formerly of the Gendarmerie, who was in charge of counter-espionage work in the regiment, had shown very clear foresight by leaving the regiment on the

very night when the momentous council of war was held, together with all his secret service men.

While we were passing Bratskii Ostrog, Pesotskii was kept by the Reds as hostage and rejoined us only a couple of hours after we were past the Ostrog. For a while I thought that they wanted to retain him altogether, and consulted Kolegov about the advisability of reversing our steps and moving on the Ostrog to rescue him. However, Kolegov assured me that there was no reason for worrying and that Pesotskii would rejoin us shortly. Which he did. What matters he discussed at Bratskii Ostrog with the Reds is not known to me or to any of the officers of the regiment with whom I am in touch. The possibility is not excluded that he laid then the foundation of his further course of action and sent some messages to the Irkutsk staff of the Reds.

As we were moving along the Angara we were amazed by the prosperity of the villages along its shores and islands. Civil war had taken no toll here. The men and women of the settlements we passed crowded around to have a look at us whenever we stopped for meals or for the night. "What are these Whites like? Are they like us, or are they a different people altogether?" exclaimed these tall good-looking girls, as they observed us rather in the manner of the public at a zoo, watching the gambols of a strange species of animal.

As we marched on, the Colonel with his staff and the Slavgorod mounted militia moved more rapidly than my battalion, and I was sometimes as far as forty miles behind them. We were taking the usual precautions, guarding against the possibility of an attack on the part of the irregular Reds. However, they did not attempt to molest us and merely followed close upon our heels. We made a habit of billeting ourselves in large groups in the roomy *izby* of the Angara villages so that we formed a compact whole, easy to defend at night by machine-gun fire. Each night I carefully checked the posts and the distribution of machine guns.

We were approaching a bifurcation of the road—one fork leading north, the other to Balagansk—when I received a message from Pesotskii to send a delegation consisting of one officer and one representing the other ranks to participate in the negotiations with Zverev, the commanding officer of the irregular Red forces at Irkutsk. This came as a great surprise to me, but as I was not familiar with the situation confronting the Colonel, I sent immediately Lieutenant Zakharchenko, in whose ability, judgment, and absolute integrity I had the fullest possible confidence, together with one of the petty officers.

At the same time I decided to march as quickly as possible in order to join the Colonel and his forces with the briefest possible delay. Early in the morning my Adjutant handed me a sheet from a fairly recent Irkutsk newspaper which he had found on the road. It contained exceedingly discouraging news. Admiral Kolchak was in prison, Irkutsk was apparently firmly held by irregular Red troops and former White units that had rebelled against Kolchak's Government. These troops were supporting some kind of provisional government formed by a coalition of socialist and radical groups. It seemed to me, however, from the pieces of information in the sheet, that the real power at Irkutsk was in the hands of a Revolutionary Committee formed by the Bolsheviks.

We were met by Zakharchenko and our other delegate as we were approaching the village where the Colonel was conducting the negotiations. Zakharchenko outlined the course of the discussions with the Reds. Zverev, the Red General, offered to give passes to those of us who wanted to emigrate, agreed to permit the officers to continue to wear the insignia of their rank and retain revolvers and side arms, to pay five hundred rubles to every man in the ranks as demobilization pay, to issue a complete new uniform and a pair of boots to all ranks and—the most important part of the offer—to guarantee a complete amnesty to all officers and men without any exceptions whatsoever. Finally, Zverev was even agreeable to leave a sufficient number of rifles with ammunition to arm men on guard duty and to protect the regiment against stray bands who might attempt to despoil us. All he wanted in return was our machine guns, most of our rifles and ammunition, and an assurance that we should not fight against his forces.

The terms of the agreement were undoubtedly excellent. I realized at once that as soon as the men heard of the complete amnesty offered them by Zverev they would not feel like fighting any more. By that time they were utterly exhausted by the long marches and the bitter cold and depressed by the news of Irkutsk, while the idea of marching to Transbaikalia to join Semenov did not hold any temptation for them—or, for that matter, for a number of the officers.

Zakharchenko told me that not only Zverev, but also the Revolutionary Committee, had countersigned the terms of the agreement and that the Colonel as well as all officers with him thought well of the offer and were for its ratification by the regiment.

Personally, I had serious doubts that Zverev and the Revolutionary Committee of Irkutsk would faithfully carry out the agreement. I did not know that at the time they were under the threat of an attack



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ADMIRAL KOLCHAK

in the hour of his defeat, September 1919

on Irkutsk by the remnants of the White army, and were willing to offer almost any terms to minimize the danger to their forces from such units as ours.

To be able to arrive at a realistic decision, I called in the company commanders, told them of the negotiations and the terms offered, and ordered them to poll their men unofficially to find out whether they would fight should I reject the terms of the agreement and decide to strike out independently of the Colonel in an attempt to march north of Lake Baikal.

Out of the five companies of the battalion only one (the Twelfth) which had less men in the ranks than the others, answered unconditionally that should I order them to fight they would obey my orders. All others either answered in the negative or gave elusive answers such as that they would fight irregular Reds but would not oppose, arms in hand, the regular Red army.

In the meantime some of the boatswains and the leading peasant volunteers came to me with a proposal: They intended to form a guerilla and to establish themselves in some northern *taiga* villages in order to try to hold out until the White army was able to stage a come-back. They asked me to take command of the guerilla, but intimated that they did not want to take with them any other officers. I had a long argument with them, pointing out that I was not in a position to separate myself from other officers and the bulk of the men; also that the formation of a guerilla at that stage had no sense because of the obvious inability of the remnants of the White army to regain ground within the next couple of years at least, and that their guerilla activities would only lead to the despoiling and antagonizing of peasants, which in turn was bound to result in the destruction of the guerilla by some Red unit with the active assistance of the local peasantry, tired of supporting the guerilla. I told them in conclusion that the battalion should act as a unit and, if they were able to instill a large number of the men with their own zeal, I was quite willing to continue in command and try to lead them east of Lake Baikal on the understanding that all officers would retain their commands. I gave them an hour to talk it over with the men and asked them to report back to me their decision, so that by the time I went to see the Colonel I should know what line of action to take.

The hour expired and the men did not return. I then went to call on Pesotskii. He discussed the whole agreement point by point with me and expressed the thought that as long as Admiral Kolchak's Government ceased to exist and he himself was in prison or probably even

dead by that time, we were free of any obligations to continue to fight; that the Reds were moving large bodies of troops both from the direction of Balagansk as well as from the villages along the railway, in order to intercept us; and finally, that the spirit of the men and of a good part of the officers was completely broken. He also added that he was certain that Zverev and the Revolutionary Committee at Irkutsk would keep their word as they had publicized their offer to us and would not be able to break the agreement without losing face with the population and even with their own men.

In reply I told Pesotskii that, as far as I was concerned, I had no faith either in the ability or the desire of the Reds to keep the agreement in its entirety and that I should try to go abroad as soon as possible, but since the men had lost the will to fight I had no alternative to offer and had therefore no objection to the agreement, although personally I expected no good from it. Without taunting him with the failure of his plan regarding the march north from the railway to which I had objected at the council of war, I reminded him that I had always considered it impracticable, but that at the present stage there was no sense in mutual recriminations and that we had to think of the good of the majority of our officers and men.

The next day we surrendered our machine guns and most of our ammunition and rifles to the delegates appointed by Zverev, and continued to march on Balagansk, still with a semblance of a military unit. Both officers and men were very dejected. At the same time there were no instances of insubordination and the men behaved very decently toward the officers.

Reminiscences of that march on Balagansk and then to Irkutsk are so bitter to me even at this date that I cannot bring myself to describe it at length. Suffice it to say that a few days after we signed the agreement, the Second Division of Bratskii Irregulars caught up with us and its Chief of Staff told Pesotskii in my presence that his men could not possibly suffer a White unit in possession of arms, well dressed and with a train bulging with personal effects, to continue to march on Irkutsk.

The next day Pesotskii ordered all officers to surrender their weapons to him and then handed them over, together with the rifles we still had in our possession, to the staff of the Irregular Division, the chief of which was a former officer of the Imperial army.

As soon as word was passed that all officers were without arms, the men of the Red division invaded the village where we were quartered and looted our men and ourselves, taking possession of all personal

belongings, uniforms, money and valuables. I found out later on that my own gold watch, given me by the members of Senator Elihu Root's Mission to Russia in 1917 as a souvenir of the weeks we spent together at that time, was appropriated by the Commanding Officer of the Division.

As far as my personal experiences were concerned, events took the following shape.

Lieutenant Ezhov, my Adjutant, and another officer were sitting with me in the room of an *izba*. We took off the shoulder straps from our tunics and coats to save ourselves the humiliation of seeing them torn off by the Reds, sewed into our caps and underwear a few bank-notes and documents, and were discussing whether it would be right for us now to try to go our own way regardless of the rest of the regiment. My Adjutant advanced the theory that as long as the regiment was still together, the disappearance of the senior officers would undoubtedly lead to reprisals on the part of the Reds on those who remained, and that we should stick together until the regiment was completely dispersed. With this I agreed.

As we finished our discussion, the door was thrust open and a dozen Red irregulars, pistols in hand, entered the room.

"Hands up!"

We were facing the muzzles of revolvers and pistols leveled at us by six or seven ruffianly looking fellows. As I stood looking at them I thought that the weapons in their fists were very probably those that Pesotskii had asked us to give up that morning, and the expression "Hands up!" was a recent borrowing by the Russians from Americans, apparently making its first appearance about the year of 1905 Revolution *via* the dime novels of the Nick Carter type. This led to thoughts about my American friends and whether they would ever learn what happened to me. I fully expected that my life had come to an end, but I did not experience any acute anguish or regret. What I felt was in a way not unlike what one experiences when looking at a strange and unpleasant spectacle, or in a nightmare.

The Red irregulars crowded us into the other room of the *izba* occupied by the owner's family, and lined us up against the wall. They began systematically to loot our belongings, starting with bags and then taking away watches, rings, tunics, belts, leather jerkins, and any other part of our wearing apparel that struck their fancy.

By the time they were through, I still had my khaki shirt, a pair of breeches, felt boots and a torn black sheepskin coat, whose condition was such that it did not interest the looters. In the fur cap, which

also remained in my possession, I had a few banknotes, and later I regained a volume of Shelley's poems, printed on thin paper, which I had bought in New York and carried with me ever since.

To my surprise the Red soldiers left us after completing their looting, and walked away loaded with their bundles. As a parting bolt one of them remarked: "It's your luck that not a shot was fired by any of your people. We had made up our minds to kill the whole lot of you should anybody still possess a pistol and use it against us."

I am not certain whether I was glad that I was still alive. My sense of deep humiliation, of being stripped of all that makes life worth living and of completely losing my personality, was overwhelming and benumbing.

A few minutes after the looters left, Zakharchenko came in, in a torn soldier's coat, furious and sulphurous in his language: "That's the way these bastards keep their agreements! I'll never forgive myself for signing that accursed agreement. We'd be much better off fighting our way through to Lake Baikal, Semenov and all. These jackals wouldn't have dared to attack us as long as we had a cartridge left."

I tried to calm him, telling him he was not responsible for the agreement, and if there was any question of responsibility in the matter it was Pesotskii's—and perhaps mine. Although really it seemed to be merely another instance of circumstances being stronger than individuals.

An hour or so later we were told to line up in the street. Officers were separated from men and herded into several *izby* which were guarded by sentries.

The next morning I received a brief pencil note from Pesotskii telling me that he had left for the Headquarters of the Fifth Red Army together with Kolegov and was handing the command of the Naval Regiment to me. I could not help laughing out loud at this piece of buffoonery, startling Ezhov and my Adjutant, who thought I was getting hysterical.

"Gentlemen," I said, "let it be known that I am now the Commanding Officer of the regiment. Colonel Pesotskii has finally succeeded in separating his fate from ours, curse him. We shall follow our joint destiny on foot, while he will soon be riding in one of his beloved private cars, as behooves a smart officer of the General Staff."

Pesotskii and I never met again. He succeeded in reaching the

staff of the Fifth Army, found there some friends among the General Staff officers and was ultimately appointed to command one of its brigades. Fate was unkind to him, however. A few months later his men were attacked in Transbaikalia by some White units and he was killed during a night action. One of the officers of the Naval Regiment, Lieutenant Afrosimov, now living in America, who had typhus and was placed in a hospital train while we were passing Novo-Nikolaevsk, later succeeding in getting into Transbaikalia, took part in that fight. He told me that when Pesotskii saw that he was cut off from his men and surrounded by White soldiers, he cried out: "Do not kill me, I am Colonel Pesotskii, of the General Staff, formerly in command of Kolchak's Naval Regiment." He was mercilessly bayoneted, and died pleading for his life.

Kolegov did not share his fate. He fell ill with typhoid fever very soon after joining the Red regular forces, and I saw him at the Krasnoïarsk military hospital in the fall of 1920, after my liberation from the concentration camp there. He was very weak and unable to talk very much. I do not know what became of him eventually.

To my astonishment both the officers and men of the regiment recognized, in a way, that I was now their Commanding Officer. We were a mere mob in tatters, but they continued to come to me with their troubles, and even the Reds considered me the chief among their prisoners.

We were marched off under an armed escort in the direction of the Trans-Siberian to Zima. On the way one of the naval officers, Polidorov, asked my permission to leave the regiment as he felt that he could make his escape by going to the headquarters of the regular Red troops and then working his way east. I gave him my blessing and he slipped away without being noticed by the escort. Later on he succeeded in getting to Shanghai. He was a resolute and plucky man and I was delighted to learn that he succeeded in achieving his purpose.

On the second day of our march to the railway, our escort learned of the defeat of the Red irregulars by the remnants of the White Siberian army at Zima. The news reached our column while we were passing through a small hamlet. The men of the escort were much upset by the news, and for a while were uncertain what to do next. While the leaders were deliberating in an *izba*, I was sent for, and told to await further orders outside. Hungry, and frozen to the marrow, I stood with my back against a board fence while a score of

Red guerillas faced me, leaning on their rifles. I did not care very much whether I lived or died. The past weeks had been too humiliating, and there was little left to live for.

Several of my fellow officers had been with me a few minutes before. As the guerilla drew up opposite us, they had all slunk off, one by one, and were watching me from a distance. Even Kuzmich had left me, looking guilty and crestfallen. They all seemed to hope there would be only one victim and, as the last Commanding Officer of the Naval Regiment, I was naturally indicated. They thought it unwise to linger near me. All who had been close to me and professed to be my friends and trusty followers had left, like rats abandoning a sinking ship.

The long sequence of revolution, civil war, marches and counter-marches moved in disconnected and swiftly changing pictures through my mind. The soothsayer, the corpse, the loss of the badge . . .

"After all, the good lady was right. This is the end of the trail."

The staff of the Red guerillas was in the *izba*, about a hundred yards away. More by instinct than by reasoning, I felt that my fate was being discussed behind the gray, unpainted log walls. Life was pretty cheap these days in Siberia, and according to all established precedent I could not expect any quarter. All I could hope for was that I should be shot at once, without any of the refinements of torture and humiliation that we knew were so often inflicted by the *taiga* guerillas on captured officers.

Time went on and I was still standing with my back to the fence, the solemn *muzhiki* with rifles at ease watching me as though I were a curious animal of some unknown species. Their faces were not at all sinister. There was little to differentiate them from the average North Russian peasant.

Finally, after what seemed to me an age-long period of time, the door of the staff *izba* was thrown open and three red-beribboned chiefs of the guerilla walked out, one of them with a piece of paper in his hand.

"All according to regulations. Even a written death warrant," I thought.

The trio walked slowly up to me. The platoon of *muzhiki* opposite me stood at attention.

Then the paper was read to me.

"The court-martial of the Bratskii Red Irregular Division has considered the case of the accused Lieutenant Commander in command

of Kolchak's Naval Regiment. Unanimously decided that the accused is guilty of treason to the people and of counter-revolutionary activities. Also unanimously decided that the penalty of death be inflicted on the said accused."

The *muzhik* stopped reading and looked hard at me. I stared back at him. There was nothing unexpected in what he read.

However, to my surprise, he resumed reading the warrant.

"In view of extenuating circumstances, particularly since the accused, when in command of a battalion of the Naval Regiment, was always zealous in preventing any looting by the passing White troops in the villages where his battalion was quartered, and also paid in cash or in goods for food and fodder commandeered, it is unanimously decided to grant the accused his life, and offer him enrollment in the guerilla."

At first I was unable to realize that they meant it, and that my exit from this world was indefinitely postponed. I managed, however, to muster enough presence of mind to stutter a few words of thanks to my judges, and to ask to be excused from enrolling in the guerilla, on the grounds of poor health, which made it imperative for me to go to the nearest hospital within reach.

So the good lady of Omsk was wrong after all. I could not blame her, however, for her mistake. She had come pretty close to the facts.

And even a soothsayer cannot gauge the mind of a Siberian peasant.

We were then told to retrace our steps and marched to Balagansk. The misery we underwent on that march was indescribable. Fortunately the weather was comparatively mild. We were constantly hungry, as our guards did not take any pains to ensure our victualing and the peasantry were not overgenerous in supplying food to captive Whites.

The Reds soon realized that it was unnecessary for them to guard us closely, as we were ourselves anxious to get to Irkutsk as soon as possible in the hope that Zverev and the Revolutionary Committee would take some steps to fulfill their agreement in part at least. So the chief of the escort merely indicated in the morning the village where they expected us to turn up at night, placed in our rear a patrol in sleighs to look out for stragglers, and themselves went on horseback and in sleighs to the appointed village, leaving us to walk in groups without much supervision. I remember thinking that probably the captive soldiers of Napoleon's Grande Armée were herded by the peasant militia of Russia in a similar manner in 1812.

There were two main problems for me on the march. First, to

obviate friction between the escort and the local population on one hand, and between the officers and men of the regiment on the other. Second, to obtain food in order to preserve our strength for the long marches.

As friction usually developed after we reached our night billets, I could devote most of my time on the daily march to efforts of obtaining food. It soon became obvious that to be successful in this food quest one had to make short detours to small hamlets and isolated farmhouses located off the main highway we were following. Gradually my own personal group, consisting of my Adjutant, my personal orderly, and one of the company commanders, developed a successful technique in obtaining food from the reluctant peasants without getting into trouble with the escort.

We would amble along, keeping a lookout for some small village located off the highway. Then we would take the narrow sleigh track leading to it and lie in wait for some peasant returning to the village from the woods or from a neighboring settlement. As soon as the peasant caught up with us we would pass the time of day with him and ask casually whether he had heard the latest news about the currency.

"And what is that, comrades?"

"The Red Government has put the Kerenskii currency back into circulation. Do you still own some notes, or did you turn them all in when Kolchak ordered them exchanged for Siberian notes?"

"What's that about Siberian money?"

"The Bolsheviki are not accepting it. Siberian money has no value any more—except for papering the walls of your *izba*."

The peasant's eyes would smolder with curiosity and he would ply us with questions. These small hamlets were cut off from the rest of the world and received no papers.

At that stage of the conversation we would remark that we had to move on, and inquired whose *izba* was the cleanest and most comfortable in his village, as we would like to stop for a brief rest.

The peasant's interest was by this time thoroughly aroused, and as he was curious to learn more about the outside world he would usually say: "A comfortable, clean *izba*? What's the matter with mine? It's as good as any. Come and take potluck with us."

Needless to say, we gave him no chance to change his mind, and hastily accepted his hospitality.

As we entered the *izba*, and our host began to explain to his wife the reason for our presence, we could plainly read on her face: "That

simpleton of mine's been fooled again. I only hope the tramps won't steal anything of value."

However, we felt secure. To defend his masculine dignity our host had to insist on our being welcomed to his *izba*, and the natural hospitality of the Russian peasantry, casually extended even to perfect strangers, did the rest.

The fare was meager: some boiled potatoes, a crust or two of stale bread, a few slices of pickled cucumbers—but we were glad to have this food as we had usually had none since the previous day.

Our host would ply us with questions: "Where are you going? Where do you come from? Who are you? What do you hear about these Bolsheviks?"

Our answers were circumspect and of neutral coloring: We were demobilized soldiers going home, on our way to Irkutsk. We were not certain whether we should stay there or try to get work somewhere on the railway. In general we did not know much about the Reds, although we had heard that on the railway textile goods were offered by them in exchange for food.

The question of textiles usually aroused the keenest interest in the lady of the house. She would cross-examine us at length as to how many yards were given each person, what was the exchange ratio, what kinds of goods were distributed, and so on. We would parry the questions to our best ability, using the bits of information we had picked up from our escort and from the stray newspaper sheets that came our way.

The host would complain about the currency situation: "First Kolchak told us to turn in the Kerenskii money. We thought it had no value whatsoever; some fellows had notes pasted on their walls, just for fun. Now the Bolsheviks say that Siberian money is no good. When is this going to stop? The Tsar's money seems to be the only kind that always has some value—but for how long?"

The main tides of civil war ran far from these small villages, and news of the strife came to them only in dribblets. Most of the peasants had only a vague idea what it was all about. There were no landlords in Siberia, and the absence of manors in the countryside made for a lack of a definite objective for internal strife in the villages. There were no Cossacks in the vicinity, and the considerable distance from the railway apparently kept away the punitive expeditions of the various *atamany* so that they did not experience that almost constant armed struggle that had gone on since 1917 in many villages along the Trans-Siberian railroad.

We spent one night in a Jewish village. These Jews had been settled on the land in the reign of Nicholas I, and were farmers. Their village was prosperous. The stock was sturdy and at the first glance indistinguishable from the "old settled" Siberian peasants.

At first I did not realize that we were in a Jewish village, it was so similar to other Siberian villages in the locality. Only after our host asked us not to use any of the family's crockery and begged us to cook our food, such as we had, separately from theirs, did it occur to me that this was a settlement of Orthodox Jews. I became quite interested in these people, as I had never before seen Jewish farmers, and had a long talk with the head of the household.

Our host was an intelligent fellow, very courteous and circumspect. He was full of the milk of human kindness. He expected that with the end of the civil strife things would improve, that a general peace and consequent well-being would descend upon the countryside. He remarked sympathetically: "There will be lots of work for people of education, such as you and your friends obviously are. There will be many things to rebuild and to improve, numerous new schools in need of teachers. You will find a place for yourselves in the new Russia. I realize how bitter this present moment is to you. Try not to think of it. Think rather of the future."

In contrast to these farmers on a comparatively high cultural level, we encountered the semi-nomadic Buriats and spent several nights in their camps and villages. The Buriats were supposed to have been Christians for several generations, but since the Revolution they had gone back to their tribal Shamanistic religion, chased Russian priests out of their settlements and plundered the churches. Before their dwellings they placed on posts skulls of horses and other animals. These Buriats were, as a rule, more unfriendly to us than the Russian peasantry. However, in one of their camps two of the leaders suggested I stay with them in order to teach school. They were anxious for their children to study, and were sure that they would be able to hide me from the Reds for a while and afterwards procure some sort of documents for me, so that I could live among them unmolested. For a moment I hesitated whether to accept their offer or not. I realized, however, that I would be missed by the escort quite soon and that in the winter it would be impossible for me to hide myself successfully in the Buriat camps.

The first scene of friction between our men and the local population developed in one of the Buriat settlements. Some of our hungry men were pressing the Buriats to give them something to eat, in-

timating that otherwise they would help themselves. The Buriats complained to the men of the escort and the latter rushed to seize the culprits. These, in turn, realized that they were in serious trouble, and ran to the *izba* where I was billeted. They burst into the room just ahead of their pursuers, who followed with bayonets fixed to their rifles.

It took more than a full half hour and a great deal of oratory of the 1917 type to talk the men of the escort out of their intention to shoot these men of ours right then and there. The argument that had most weight with them was: "You've no doubt many a time been hungry yourselves and you know what a hungry man will do to get even a crust of stale bread. These men have had their lesson. Let them be."

Finally after a great deal of swearing and threatening gestures the escort was placated and left the *izba*.

The greatest trouble, however, arose at Balagansk. The staff of the Second Bratskii Irregular Division was quartered there. It became obvious to us almost as soon as we arrived that the Reds did not know what to do with us. We learned later that they thought there was a possibility of the capture of Irkutsk by the Whites, and naturally were averse to our moving further in the direction of that city. So we were herded into the building of the local moving-picture theatre and left there to shift for ourselves as best we might. It would not have been so bad but for the constant irruptions of the men from the Irregular Division who did not participate in the initial looting of our regiment and considered themselves cheated of their share of the spoils. They came in droves as soon as it became dark, and moving among us they would pick out a cap, a pair of felt boots, a shirt, or a pair of breeches that struck their fancy and take them away, leaving instead their mephitic rags.

A few citizens of Balagansk, apparently sympathizing with us, brought food occasionally and stopped to gossip with us. It soon became clear that our fate hung on a thread and that we had every reason to expect the worst.

In the morning I discussed the situation with Zakharchenko and decided to take action. I went to the man in command of the guard and told him I wanted to be taken before the General commanding the Division. After some delay I was escorted to the house he occupied.

The scene reminded me vividly of Pushkin's immortal pages in the *Captain's Daughter* when he describes Pugachev's headquarters.

The leader of the Red forces had a strong, well-chiseled face and a heavy crop of dark wavy hair, and sported a military-looking trimmed moustache. He sat on a chair with his hands on his knees as a man accustomed rather to the heavy benches of the Siberian *izby* than flimsy Western furniture entirely unsuited to his solid frame. His staff was a nondescript group of people including two officers who had joined our regimental staff while we were still marching along the railway. They had apparently some sort of secretarial position as they were busily typing letters on decrepit typewriters captured from the equipment of the Naval Regiment.

"What do you want from me?" said the General, looking at me with obvious curiosity. "You're the Colonel of the Naval Regiment, aren't you?"

At that moment I noticed a chain dangling from the pocket of his tunic and was sorely tempted to ask the General how he liked my watch. I checked myself, however, and answered: "I am not really the Colonel. As you know, the real Colonel left for the headquarters of the Fifth Army, together with the Deputy Colonel. I understand they went there to secure the support of the Army staff for the faithful execution of the treaty concluded by Comrade Zverev and the Irkutsk Revolutionary Committee with our regiment, which was so grossly violated by your men."

"What are you talking about? Zverev is not my chief. I don't recognize his authority, nor do I owe any allegiance to the Irkutsk Committee. Do you expect me to tell my men that you people can go on to Irkutsk with your rifles and pistols, all dressed up as though you were going to a party, while they themselves go in rags? You surrendered, that's all I know, and you should be grateful to be still alive after all the damage you Whites have done in these years."

"A treaty is a treaty, Comrade General. No doubt the Red army will be displeased to learn that a solemn agreement, widely publicized in the press, was broken, giving Zverev and the Committee the reputation of men without honor who lied to a group of soldiers acting in good faith. Furthermore, this regiment consists largely of peasants and workers. I could understand your taking it out on the officers, as class enemies, but I fail to see why you want to antagonize honest toilers in their first experience at the hands of the Soviet Government. By your acts the whole Red army will be judged."

The Red leader looked at me in a puzzled way, playing with the fob of my watch chain. He seemed nonplussed by the view-

point presented to him, I decided to take advantage of his indecision, and continued: "May I suggest that you communicate without delay with Zverev and the Irkutsk Committee or with the staff of the Fifth Army, and in the meantime treat us as human beings, stop your soldiers from annoying us and stealing the few rags we have left, and order them to give us something to eat. Even if you consider us prisoners of war, which we really are not, that does not mean that we should be treated as the worst kind of criminals."

"Well, I will think it over. Now you may go back where you came from," the General concluded.

In the afternoon we were given food, the visits of the marauders were stopped, and the next morning we were marched off in the direction of Irkutsk. By this time we were looking forward to Irkutsk as to a promised land. We thought of that city in terms of freedom, change of clothes, hot baths, good food, and rest.

Nevertheless another disappointment awaited us as we reached the outskirts of Irkutsk. We were first stopped in one of the suburbs while some men of the escort went to the Revolutionary Committee for orders. After a couple of hours of waiting we were marched to the principal prison of the city and lined up opposite its gates.

This was the last time I faced the officers and men of the Naval Regiment in the semblance of a military unit. I stood before the remnants of a regiment, drawn up in a ragged double line, with the officers on the right flank. We were a strange collection of scarecrows by then, and there was nothing martial left in our appearance.

Then the gates of the prison were swung open and our escort led us into a small building in the courtyard, which in former times was used for prisoners in transit. We were crowded in, and the heavy door was locked behind us.

As the windows were hermetically sealed and there was no artificial ventilation of any kind, we soon began to feel the lack of oxygen. Only those who sat on the comparatively high trestles built along the walls to serve as beds could breathe at all freely. The rest of us were soon at the point of asphyxiation. I was deeply touched when the men made room for me on the trestles and handed me up over the heads of those on the floor, so that I might breathe the purer air. Zakharchenko was also on the trestles, and after talking the situation over with him I decided upon a risky course of action in order to bring this torture to an end.

I addressed the men briefly, pointing out to them that it was

obvious that within a few hours we should all be suffocated. We had not been given food since the morning, and even drinking water was lacking. If they agreed, I would make a complaint to the chief warden, and insist that we be transferred to other buildings and given food and water, and ask for a speedy decision of the Revolutionary Committee as to our fate. I warned them that this might lead to reprisals, and I wanted them to understand clearly the risk we would take.

"Go ahead! Go to it! Anything is better than slow death!" shouted the men.

I made my way to the door and began to pound on it with all the strength I could summon, while those standing near me lent their willing fists to raise as much noise as possible. The sentry shouted gruffly through the slit in the door:

"What the devil's going on there? Cut out the racket, or I'll shoot!"

"Call the chief warden! Tell him we want to see him at once. Otherwise we'll break every window in the building!"

The men were shouting at the top of their lungs: "The warden! We want the warden!"

The noise attracted the sergeant of the guard, to whom I repeated our request, to the accompaniment of a vociferous chorus: "We want the warden!"

The sergeant left and within a quarter of an hour or so, the door was opened to admit the warden in company with another person dressed in civilian clothes (a member of the Board of the dreaded Cheka, as we learned later) and a dozen armed soldiers.

The newcomers were greeted with shouts: "Give us bread! We're hungry! There's no air here! You're worse than the Tsar's gendarmes!"

The warden, a small, lean, middle-aged man with a dark complexion and an intellectual face, motioned for silence.

"What's the matter? What's all the noise about?"

"Comrade Warden," I said, "I should like to lay before you a few matters. This regiment made a certain treaty with Comrade Zverev and the Revolutionary Committee of Irkutsk. Among other things the treaty guaranteed a complete amnesty to all officers and men, a lump sum paid to every man in the ranks, new uniforms and boots and even permission to go abroad to those who wanted to emigrate. Instead of that, we are thrown into prison, given no food, and so crowded that we are being slowly asphyxiated. Why are you

doing all this, Comrade Warden? The 'lumpenproletarians' are not your class enemies. If you want vengeance, take it out on us officers of the regiment, but for Heaven's sake fulfill the terms of your agreement with these peasants and workers."

The warden smiled: "Lumpenproletarians! Where did you learn that word? No, we're not waging war on peasants and workers, and the Soviet Power is keeping its treaties, even those concluded with its worst enemies. I cannot liberate you—that's a matter for the Revolutionary Committee—but I'll transfer you to other buildings although we are crowded, as you undoubtedly know. Bread rations will be issued as soon as the transfer is effected."

Within half an hour we were in a larger building where there was enough air; buckets of water were brought in and we were given one pound of black bread each.

The next afternoon the warden came again with the Cheka officer and told the men to elect delegates to negotiate with the Revolutionary Committee.

"We don't want to elect anyone! Speak to our Colonel. We have confidence in him," the men shouted, to the great surprise of the warden and the chekist.

That, I may say, was the proudest moment of my life! A prisoner, hungry and in rags, these men still recognized me as their leader. I was thrilled to the bone and came very near to tears.

"All right," said the warden, "let your Colonel speak to the Revolutionary Committee tonight, although it would have been better for you to deal through an elected body."

Later in the evening the Cheka officer called for me. He was accompanied by a girl secretary and had no armed escort with him. I was handed over to him by the prison guards and we went on foot to the headquarters of the Irkutsk Revolutionary Committee.

On the way, the chekist and the girl chatted with me, cracked jokes, and even hummed the famous lines:

"Where are you rolling, apple?
Once you're in the Cheka
You won't return from there!"

The Irkutsk Cheka was still in its infancy. My companion was obviously an intellectual, probably a radical lawyer. The girl was a commonplace middle-class youngster to whom the Revolution was a lark and the Cheka merely another exciting experience. Both of them were quite decent to me, spoke politely, offered me a cigarette,

and expressed the hope that the committee would issue orders to liberate us. It was a far cry from these provincial beginners to the real stuff—the chekist trained in the ruthless school of Felix Dzerzhinskii, whom the Moscow communists liked to think of as the Flaming Sword of Revolution.

The committee was sitting in a large, dimly lit room. The members were dressed in leather jackets, soldiers' greatcoats or short sheepskin coats. Most of them looked like workers rather than intellectuals.

When the Cheka officer introduced me as the Colonel of the Naval Regiment, the committee members looked at me in obvious surprise. There was evidently nothing in my outward appearance to suggest the commanding officer of a crack regiment of the White army.

Frostbite sores were on my cheeks, forehead, and chin, my nose was distended, red, and swollen, ears deformed by frostbite, a month-old stubble of a beard, unkempt hair, a dirty khaki shirt thrust into worn breeches, and the rags of a sheepskin coat—I looked like a professional beggar rather than an officer.

After a moment's silent scrutiny, one of the committeemen asked me to state my complaint. I went over briefly the circumstances connected with the signing of the treaty, enumerated the principal clauses and asked that the treaty be fulfilled and that we be set free at once.

"Are you going to ask that we return to you and other officers your rifles and pistols?" sarcastically commented one of the committeemen.

I replied guardedly that we would not stand on the details as long as the gist of the agreement was carried out—complete amnesty, documents permitting circulation within Irkutsk and other Red territory, payment of the demobilization money and the issue of new uniforms and boots, these being the essentials. I wound up with an impassioned appeal to the spirit of fair play and decency of the committee and asked:

"What will the people of Irkutsk think of you, citizens, when they find out that our regiment is in prison? They've read the treaty you yourselves published in the papers. How are you going to explain such lack of good faith?"

I was asked to leave the room and wait outside, while the fate of the regiment was discussed. About ten minutes later I was called in and told that we should be liberated on the following day, that

documents would be issued to all officers and men to the effect that we were demobilized in accordance with the treaty, also that five hundred rubles would be paid to every man in the ranks and that the Labor Exchange would handle our applications for work. As to uniforms and boots: "We haven't enough for our own men, or for the regular Red army when their units reach Irkutsk."

This was more than I had expected after the experiences of the last few weeks. I was delighted to know that the men would get their amnesty and be supplied with documents that permitted them to return to civilian life. So I went back to prison with a springy step and my head full of plans for my own escape.

When I explained to the men the results of my negotiations they were overjoyed to hear the good news.

The next day—February was now approaching its end—we were set free, and I began to look around for some temporary employment, as I had no funds at all beyond the few notes in my fur cap. Ultimately one of my company commanders, my orderly, and I found work at the Irkutsk Meteorological Observatory. As my orderly received with his job of night watchman a small apartment at the gate of the Observatory enclosure, all three of us moved in and established a communal household, taking turns at domestic chores.

In the meantime I found that there was still a French consul at Irkutsk; also that a Japanese military train was waiting in the yards of the depot. At the first opportunity I called on the consul and was received by his wife and himself. As my French was fair and my English adequate (the wife spoke English) I succeeded in convincing the consul that in spite of my rags and the absence of any documents to prove my connection with the British navy I was a former officer of His Majesty's Senior Service, and won from him a half promise to give me a pass to the Japanese train, so that I might get out of Irkutsk.

On returning from the consulate I met one of the officers of the Naval Regiment, Lieutenant Zabelin, who had served temporarily in the French navy in 1918, performing some duties ashore in one of the French African colonies. I told him about my conversation with the consul. Zabelin immediately produced his French demobilization certificates and begged me to take him to the consulate the next day to help him to explain himself there, since he knew very little French. He was one of those Russians, who—our national reputation for efficiency in languages notwithstanding—are able to

stay for years in a foreign country without picking up more than a few words, which they mispronounce almost beyond recognition.

The next morning we went together to see the French consul. At first things went smoothly, and I was already rejoicing that the escape from Irkutsk was within sight. However, as soon as the consul's wife turned to Zabelin and spoke to him in French, expressing her pleasure at meeting a former officer of her country's navy, our troubles began. In spite of his most gallant efforts, Zabelin could not answer the consul's lady at all, and asked me to act as interpreter. This made the consul suspicious and his misgivings included both of us. He turned Zabelin's French document this way and that, compared the photograph on it with Zabelin's countenance and repeated: "*Comment se fait-il que Monsieur ne parle pas le français?*" That a Russian formerly in the service of France, a nobleman supposed to learn his French in the nursery, should be incapable of uttering the simplest sentence in Voltaire's language was incomprehensible to a representative of the Republic.

Ultimately he said that he would have to telegraph for instruction to the Allied Military Missions at Vladivostok and that we should call again within a few days. This was the end of my hopes of escape.

IN THE CELLARS OF THE IRCHEKA

WITHIN two days the regular Red army units moved into Irkutsk and began a systematic round-up of former White army officers. After a preliminary examination I was separated from the rest and sent to the Cheka for detention and further examination. By this time the Cheka was run by specialists sent from Moscow, and the amateurs of the provisional Irkutsk organization were either thrown out altogether or reduced to subordinate positions.

The "cellar" of the Ircheka (Irkutsk Commission for Fighting Counter-Revolution) was filled to overflowing. There were twenty of us in a small room. The group of prisoners confined in that room was a motley crowd. In the first few days after our arrest there was very little mutual confidence among the inmates. They observed each other suspiciously, always on the lookout for a Cheka stool pigeon in their midst. Only gradually a certain amount of mutual trust was established, and groups of friends were formed.

One of the prisoners jocularly defined the two principal social strata among the inmates as the "bourgeois" and the "proletarians." These categories were made up respectively of people who received food parcels from their relatives at large and those who had to subsist on the meager rations of the Cheka, without outside assistance. There were only a few fortunates who belonged to the first class. They included a corpulent Jewish barber, a former military judge, Colonel Dubenko, and a journalist by the name of Kruchinin.

Ruben Varshaver, the barber, received daily from his family a large number of packages with all kinds of food which he often shared with the other prisoners. He was well liked on that account, and was held up as a shining example to the other "bourgeois," who were by no means as generous with their gifts.

"A Jew—and a kind one at that! Not like this fellow Dubenko, who wouldn't give a crumb even to a fellow officer!"

A former warden of one of the Volga prisons, Efimov—a lean, cadaverous-looking man with round hungry eyes and a long beak of a nose—simply could not look calmly on anything edible. As soon as the sergeant of the guard brought Varshaver's parcel, Efimov would stare at the barber, attentively following his every movement as he untied his bundle and took the covers off the containers. He would get some food from Varshaver, chew every morsel carefully, and then return to his corner.

The other "bourgeois" ate their food without sharing it. Dubenko devoured his in the darkest corner of the room, reminding one of a dog gnawing at a bone won in a hard-contested battle.

We, the "proletariat," made solemn vows every day to divide our bread rations into three parts so that it would last until the evening, eating a part of it with the morning tea, with dinner and with supper, respectively. All our good intentions fell by the wayside, however, at the sight of the freshly baked grayish bread rationed out to us in the morning. By noon not a crumb was left, and at supper we had to swill the thin, muddy-looking prison soup without any bread to make it more acceptable.

A young Transbaikalian Cossack, Fedka, who was accused of espionage and something else no less dangerous to the Soviet Government in Siberia, daily expressed his amazement: "Now how did that happen? Didn't I decide firmly to leave some bread for supper and there isn't a morsel left!"

Averkiev, a stolid Perm peasant who had served as a volunteer with the Czechs, made some supercilious noises in his throat and commented: "What d'you expect, you fool? Is it humanly possible to make a pound of bread last an entire day?"

We did not receive any books or newspapers. Some news reached us through the guards, most of whom were former White army soldiers incorporated in the Red army. They were quite friendly to us, and ready to gossip about events in the city and what they had read in the papers. Calls for examination by the Cheka officials did not occur often. Time moved at a snail's pace, one day slowly following another in dull, tiresome sequence, all as monotonously alike as two worn nickels.

One evening the tedium was interrupted by a new arrival. A tall, wiry man, dressed in black leather jacket, new topboots and with a red star on his cap, was led into the room.

At first we were inclined to think that the newcomer was a komissar or a chekist guilty of some crime. However, my neighbor Ensign Bocharov (the "Tatar," as I teasingly called him on account of his former connection with the Ufa Rifles Division which was recruited from Tatars) soon recognized the new prisoner.

"That's the Colonel of the General Staff, Turin. He was quite a personage at Omsk. For a while he was even considered as a candidate for the position of Chief of Staff at G.H.Q. But where did he get the red star?"

Turin found a place for himself near the wall and sat there, squatting on his haunches and gripping his knees with his hands. He reminded me of a newly captured bird of prey unable to become reconciled to a cage.

Later in the evening Turin spoke to the military judge, whom he recognized as an officer by his clothes: "I don't understand what this is all about. I have an important position in the Kalashnikov People's Revolutionary Army, now being moved into Transbaikalia. I was on my way to headquarters when I was suddenly arrested and brought over here. The chekists did not even allow me to telephone to Kalashnikov. I am certain my arrest is due to a misunderstanding."

The Colonel enunciated his remarks in the tone of a busy man interrupted in an important task by some trifling bit of red tape.

The men nearest to Turin listened in silence, while the military judge said sympathetically: "I also fail to understand why I am detained here. There must be an error of some kind on the part of the authorities."

Bocharov whispered to me in great glee: "What a nerve this fellow Turin has! I guess he has signed at least a hundred death warrants, and here he sits and talks about misunderstanding. Well, he will soon learn what kind of 'error' this is, when the Cheka gets busy with him."

It was getting dark and we arranged ourselves for the night on the floor, using our caps and jackets as pillows and other bits of clothing as blankets. Turin suddenly got up and began to pace the room in long strides, stepping over the bodies of the sleepers on the floor.

A few woke up and swore a string of highly picturesque oaths at the Colonel. Turin paid not the slightest attention. Only after a good half of the prisoners joined in the chorus of abuse did he resume his seat.

I soon fell asleep and did not wake until reveille was sounded. I noticed that Turin was sitting in the same posture as the night before. He apparently had not had a wink of sleep.

After morning tea there was a call for volunteers to split firewood in the yard. Turin joined the group that went out to do the work and spent the whole morning at the job. Varshaver and I had a long discussion about our future life in America, where we both intended to go as soon as we were liberated. Ruben promised to teach me barbering and to pay my passage to New York, where he was going to settle and open a barber shop. In return he asked me to teach him English, and I started to give him his first lesson right then and there.

At dinnertime Turin did not say a word and refused to eat, remarking that he could not feed on garbage. Ruben offered him a piece of *gefuellte Fisch*—succulent pike cooked in the Jewish manner. The Colonel thanked him but refused the offer.

The day passed in the usual way. Two prisoners—the young Cossack Fedka and the peasant who had served with the Czechs—were called out for examination. They returned shortly before supper, and, without replying to Bocharov's query as to how they had fared at the hands of the examiner, threw themselves on some rugs on the floor and remained silent.

In the evening there was a call for three men to wash floors in the examiners' offices on the third floor. By tacit agreement such chores were usually performed by soldier or peasant prisoners, and officers or intellectuals did not, as a rule, participate. This time, however, Turin volunteered and went upstairs with the two other prisoners.

Darkness came on. The scrubbing detail had as yet not returned. We had settled down for the night when two of them came back. Turin was not with them.

At first nobody paid any attention to his absence. However, the former military judge soon became aware of it and showed signs of being alarmed: "Did he escape, by any chance?"

"Why, how could he escape?" replied Bocharov. "The doors are guarded by sentries, and there were two men of the escort with him."

Time passed and still Turin did not appear.

"We may be held responsible if he really succeeded in escaping . . ." began the judge.

"He didn't escape from this room," snarled Bocharov.

"That's true, of course. But just the same, there is a kind of

joint responsibility on all of us. The chekists will say we didn't report his absence. Then what?" said the former prison warden, coming to the judge's assistance.

The barber objected plaintively, "How can we be held responsible for the guarding of other prisoners? That's the sentries' business."

Dubenko and Efimov were not convinced.

"Just the same, wouldn't it be better to pass a hint to the commandant of the Cheka that the Colonel has disappeared?"

The editor, a former member of the famous revolutionary party of the People's Will, grew very indignant. Sitting up on the torn overcoat that served him as bedding, he fulminated at the judge: "The hell you will! That's the last straw! D'you want to drag us down to the level of criminals?"

Bocharov crept up to Dubenko and whispered, "Just you dare report! We'll strangle you and say you committed suicide."

The former warden was anxious to help the judge, but the temper of the other prisoners was so evident that Efimov elected to hold his peace.

We stretched ourselves out again on the floor but none of us could sleep. We were awaiting further developments.

About midnight, heavy steps along the corridor announced the approach of the Commandant. A giant of a man, dressed in blue cloth with a service pistol at his hip and a large red star on the breast pocket of his tunic, he burst into the room like a furious bull.

"Get up for roll call!" he bellowed.

We got slowly and deliberately to our feet, and took our time in lining up.

"Get a move on, you White Guard scoundrels!"

The sergeant of the guard, following the list of prisoners with his index finger, began to call the roll. He came to the last name:

"Turin!"

Silence.

"Where's Turin?"

Continued silence.

"I'm asking you, where is Turin?" stormed the Commandant, turning to Bocharov.

"I do not know. He was escorted to perform some work on the upper floor and did not return to the cell."

"Perhaps he went to another cell for the night," timorously volunteered the barber.

"Silence, you fat animal! I'm not speaking to you. The whole room-

ful of you will be responsible—you'll make the acquaintance of the firing squad yet! Running away, indeed. I'll show you!"

We suppressed our joy. Now we were sure that Turin had succeeded in escaping. He had several hours' clear start on the Cheka and had, therefore, a pretty good chance of getting away.

The Commandant pulled his pistol out of its holster and began waving it wildly at us.

"Tell me immediately, where did he go?"

He seized the barber and Bocharov by the scruff of the neck and dragged them to his office upstairs.

Lights were switched off, but of course we could not sleep and talked in whispers to each other.

"How the devil did he manage to escape?" exclaimed Fedka. "Just as if he had vanished into thin air. Did he get away over the roofs by any chance?"

"A man of decision," commented the editor, "thought the whole thing out well, laid his plans carefully and—bing! he's gone!"

In about three hours the other two returned. The barber was shaking like an aspen leaf. Bocharov whispered to me with a wry smile, "Didn't he get the wind up, that devil of a Commandant? I thought for a while it was all up with both of us."

The next morning one of the sentries, a former White soldier, told us how Turin had succeeded in escaping.

"That Colonel's a clever fellow and a game one too. He was escorted to the corridor upstairs with his pail of water and told off to wash the floor. He noticed that the men of the escort both went into the examiner's office with the other prisoners. He hid his pail behind a door and walked down the main stairway. All in black leather, with a red-starred cap, he looked just like a chekist. The guards at the bottom of the stairs never imagined he was a prisoner—all of you are either in rags or in officers' clothing. The sentry outside the door never asked him for his pass. He thought he was a Cheka examiner or a komissar of some sort. So he walked out and disappeared. The Commandant and the sergeant in command of the guard will be court-martialed. Very likely the sentries will be shot."

We were soon transferred to the Irkutsk Central Prison and dispersed to different cells. I never again saw any of the men I had shared that room with. I learned later, however, that Fedka the Cossack and the Perm peasant were executed, and that the editor died in the prison hospital of spotted typhus, which was decimating the prisoners.

Turin was not caught and, as I heard, succeeded in reaching Chita

in Transbaikalia where he joined Semenov's forces. What happened to him afterwards I do not know.

During the weeks I spent at the Cheka I was examined four times. The actual examinations were conducted by an examiner of the same type as the man who took me over from the prison to call on the Irkutsk Revolutionary Committee. He was probably also a lawyer. As far as his political opinions went, I gathered he was not a Bolshevik but probably either a Menshevik or a member of some moderate socialist group. He did not belong to the regular Cheka staff, and was apparently recruited locally from the personnel of the provisional Cheka formed by the Revolutionary Committee before the arrival of the regular Red army in the city. I got the impression that there was little love lost between him or the other examiners who worked in his office, and the regular personnel of the Cheka.

The Commandant, a rough, blustering fellow, on more than one occasion, in spite of my presence, rapped out remarks showing his disapproval of the examiners, reminding them that local chekists had frequently been shot out of hand and that in one Siberian city the entire personnel of the provisional organization had been executed.

The examination was conducted, so far as I was concerned, without any effort on the part of the examiner to intimidate me. True, the bright lights directly in one's face, the nocturnal hour of the examination, and the silent figures of other chekists in the background created a tense atmosphere, but the tone was an even one and the answers were written down correctly without any attempt to falsify my statements.

This orderly procedure was sometimes interrupted by the Commandant, who was obviously impatient of the quasi-judicial attitude of the examiner.

Once he pulled out his pistol, put it to my temple and roared: "Come clean, you yellow-livered White Guard! I know all about you! Last summer you took part in a punitive expedition on the Irtysh River. You'll be shot anyhow later, but I'll kill you right now unless you confess!"

By that time I knew for a certainty that the Cheka had no materials about my activity in Siberia and at Archangel, and that the Commandant was bluffing. I was the only former member of the Naval Regiment in the clutches of the Cheka at the time, with the exception of a marine who had joined the regiment at Omsk and deserted at Novo-Nikolaevsk. This man acted as a sort of factotum

in the Commandant's office and was called upon to testify against me. Fortunately, he had not been long with the regiment and had served with the First Battalion, so that all he knew about me was the fact that I had commanded the Third Battalion, which of course was already known to the Cheka. To show his zeal, he invented all kinds of stories about the officers neglecting the welfare of the men, taking all the best houses for their own billets, swilling vodka all the time and appropriating government money for their own purposes. All this, of course, had no immediate bearing on my examination, but I made a point of disproving his statements and discrediting him still further by drawing the attention of the examiner to the fact that this man had marched with the regiment from Omsk to Novo-Nikolaevsk, while all the men who sympathized with the Soviet Government deserted *before* we left Omsk. I think the examiner was convinced that the former marine was a mere time-server—*shkurnik*, as the expression was—a man whose first care was to save his own hide. At any rate, he was never again called upon to testify against me. In a way he was helpful to me, since his testimony, though unfriendly, definitely established the fact that I was connected with the Naval Regiment even at Omsk, and in this respect corroborated my own statements.

Knowing all this, I was not greatly perturbed by the Commandant's blustering and, squeezing out a wan smile, I said in as level a voice as I could command: "Comrade Commandant, please keep your pistol off my temple. It might go off by accident. Anyhow I don't like the feeling of the muzzle against my skin. And it is illegal to intimidate prisoners."

The examiner was watching the Commandant's performance with obvious disapproval, but without interfering.

The Commandant cursed me with the vilest words from the rich vocabulary of the Russian peasantry, but put his pistol back into the holster and walked away.

The next time I was examined, he interrupted the examination by asking, "Have you ever been a member of the Bolshevik Party?"

I was considerably taken aback by this question.

"No; how did that occur to you?"

"One of the Irkutsk Communists, a girl, came to see me yesterday to intercede for you. Said she knew you quite well and that you should be liberated. She raised quite a row about it in the office. Do you know whom I mean?"

I pleaded ignorance so as not to implicate anyone, although I sus-

pected that my advocate was the sweetheart of one of the Siberian officers whom I met through him while I was still at large at Irkutsk. At the time we had had tremendous arguments about Marxism and Hegel, and an amiable discussion on Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, during which I had given her my impressions of the Chicago and New York slums.

I was fairly certain that I had a good chance of surviving, provided the Cheka were not able to prove that I had had any connection with the Kolchak Government departments concerned with intelligence, counter-espionage, or propaganda work, or had ever belonged to White officers' groups engaged in counter-revolutionary activities, or taken part in any punitive expeditions, or volunteered for service in the White army; so I stuck to a brief account of my having been mobilized at Vladivostok, where I happened to be between trips as a mate on American freighters. I mentioned also that I had served in a minor capacity with one of the subdivisions of the Navy Department at Omsk and that after that round of duty I commanded the Third Battalion of the Naval Regiment, which never took part in any punitive expedition and was actually a training and not a fighting unit. I was particularly sure of my ground, since before leaving Omsk I had personally supervised the destruction of all the documents left through oversight by the officers of the Navy Department at the time of their evacuation, and was pretty certain that the Cheka did not have in their possession a complete set of the departmental orders and would not be able to trace the fact that for a few months I was in charge of the Foreign Division of the Navy Department and later acted, *pro tem.*, as chief of the Division of Operations—the counter-part of the Naval General Staff at Omsk.

As far as I could learn, in these days no physical violence was used on officers and intellectuals by the Cheka at Irkutsk, beyond such attempts at intimidation as I have already described. By a strange irony, this apparently did not hold true in so far as soldiers, Cossacks, peasants, and workers were concerned. I knew of several instances where such prisoners were mercilessly beaten up by the Commandant's henchmen in order to wring a confession from them. Thus an intellectual status remained an asset, a sort of "privilege of the nobility" as in the old days, when corporal punishment was inflicted by Russian courts on people of certain classes, while the nobility and the clergy—the intellectuals of the day—were exempt.

The long hours of examination were as a rule a very great strain on me, and I used to lie on the floor of our room for hours, some-

times a whole day, before I recovered. Many prisoners could not stand it and confessed from sheer nervous exhaustion, perhaps feeling that the catharsis, even if it might lead to capital punishment, was an easier way out than the constant struggle for hours and hours to keep up a consistent account of one's past and not contradict oneself at the different examinations.

After the examinations were over I felt fairly certain that I would be liberated quite soon, for the Cheka had failed to establish anything that seriously incriminated me beyond the fact that I was a former officer of the White forces. And I knew that at that period of the Civil War this was not regarded by the Red authorities as a capital offense.

Under these circumstances I felt pretty optimistic about my chances to recover my freedom and be able to resume my attempts to emigrate. Perhaps it was wishful thinking on my part, but in a way the conviction that grew on me gradually that I had outwitted the Cheka and that nothing more unpleasant than a short term of imprisonment was in store, was a tower of strength and helped me to regain an almost complete equanimity, even placidity. I read and reread the volume of Shelley's poems still in my possession and started to learn *Prometheus* by heart, which task I found exceedingly hard, and I did not succeed in memorizing the poem during the entire term of my incarceration. The news that I was to be transferred to the Irkutsk Central Prison came, therefore, as a complete surprise to me. I had expected to be liberated directly from the cellar of the Ircheka, barring unforeseen circumstances such as a raid of White forces on Irkutsk, in which case, as I clearly realized, my chances of survival were almost nil, since the Cheka would probably play safe and execute all the political prisoners in their hands.

THE SMALLEST CHINESE ARMY

IT was almost the middle of March when I was transferred to the Irkutsk Central Prison. The large imposing buildings of the jail were overcrowded, even according to Soviet standards. Over eighteen hundred hungry and unspeakably filthy prisoners, mostly political, were living in daily uncertainty as to their fate. The following notation appeared opposite my name in the prison register: "Hard labor for life; sentenced for counter-revolutionary activities." I was told to sign my name in an adjoining column. This was the first intimation of my sentence, since the Cheka investigators, having plagued me with endless questions for several weeks, had not condescended to inform me of their decision. That one could be sentenced for life without proof of any definite crime seemed to me impossible, as I still believed that even the Bolsheviks would hesitate to impose such a sentence without better grounds than "class enemy" or a vague suspicion of possible counter-revolutionary activities. Such illusions have long since been shed, but at the time they helped me to meet this somewhat startling news with comparative equanimity. Since 1917 one government had succeeded another with a rapidity that would have kept even a Latin-American guessing, hardened as he is to that sort of thing from a tender age. The stolid Siberians were completely bewildered by these swift changes of rulership and were beginning to speculate on how long even the Soviets could hold their own. The jails were the scene of a constant ebb and flow of hordes of political prisoners; hardly had they time to empty themselves of the radical political offenders of the Tsarist era than they were swamped again by an influx of bourgeois reactionaries imprisoned by the previous inmates. This tidal cycle had twice repeated itself, which helped considerably to promote the conviction that unless one were shot at dawn—or at some other hour peculiarly

avored by the ruling group for such forms of amusement—one stood a fairly good chance of being free again in a few months or so.

I therefore entered the heavy iron-grilled gates of the Irkutsk Prison, not in the chastened spirit of a man about to serve a life sentence, but rather in that of a weary wanderer who has reached a haven of rest, with peaceful, uneventful days ahead and with time all one's own to think down civil war, ambushes, guerilla raids, and endless marches through the virgin *taiga* of Siberia. That chapter, happily, was closed, and one could forget the various forms of frightfulness perpetrated in the name of political idealism in the log-built villages of Siberia, and be relieved at last of the almost unbearable load of responsibility of looking after a battalion of several hundred soldiers in a completely disorganized country. So that the turnkey's rebuke: "This is a prison, not a dance hall," was needed to bring me to a proper mood of solemnity and cut short an exchange of jokes with a military aviator who had just affixed his signature to a sentence identical with my own. We felt we ought not to outrage the guard's sense of propriety, and assumed the hang-dog mien that becomes those about to forsake freedom forever.

We were directed to a cell which in the effete Tsarist days was supposed to hold eleven prisoners. Under the new plan of the Soviets it housed forty-two inmates, crowded into the square room in a manner that would have shamed an expert sardine packer.

My new cellmates were a motley crew. The aviator and I were the only political prisoners of white race. On the right side of the room a dozen Chinese, in heavily padded blue cotton coats, squatted on the dirty flags. The left side of the cell was occupied by a lot of hard-bitten young fellows who were listening to a spirited discussion on the relative merits of the Kerenskii and Bolshevik régimes. I learned later that this group consisted of professional pickpockets with a leavening of burglars. Along the wall facing the entrance sat a few quiet, mild-mannered men—murderers, as I found out. The aviator and I, both professional soldiers, instinctively made a beeline for this wall and joined the murderers, who received us with moderate friendliness. In accordance with prison etiquette, no questions were asked of us, beyond an inquiry as to how long we had stayed in the Cheka detention cellars.

The room was bare of all furniture, except for the iron bedframes fixed to the walls, which could be raised or lowered as required. They were the only form of bed left intact—neither webbing, mattresses,

nor bedding had survived. Another ornament of the room was the *parasha* made famous by Dostoevskii in his *House of the Dead*. It made its presence known by a mephitic stench which lingered long with me as a pungent memory of the Irkutsk prison. The cell was very cold, dank, and stuffy. There was a shortage of firewood, and the authorities made no undue efforts to obtain any kind of fuel. Two feet of stone and mortar were not sufficient to keep out the fierce Siberian winter, and our tattered sheepskins and the padded coats of the Chinese were totally inadequate protection against the cold, penetrating dampness that chilled us to the marrow.

At six o'clock in the afternoon a detail of prisoners brought in supper—a pailful of thin gruel, a can of hot water for tea, and slices of bread left over from the morning distribution. Large wooden spoons were passed round, and these were afterwards stowed away in the tops of high boots, *muzhik* fashion. We were each provided with an earthenware bowl or empty tin can, which we dipped into the pail of soup. Arguments as to the Kerenskii régime continued during the meal. “Now, *he* was a real fellow,” proclaimed one of the young thieves, “he let us all out. And what a life we lived—no police, no detectives! Pity it didn’t last—barely gave us a chance to square up with the dicks. These Bolsheviks are no good. A lot of police—more than the Tsar had—throw you into prison, shoot you for any little thing—like a holdup. Me for Alexander Fedorovich every time—none of your Lenin-Trotskii business. Hey! You there, don’t eat over the pail! If you haven’t the decency to get yourself a tin can, keep your spoon clear of the pail!”

The rebuked murderer swore a long and highly suggestive string of oaths, but followed the thief’s suggestion.

The next morning the senior of the cell, one of the thieves involved in a holdup, was taken away and shot by the Cheka. A meeting of the inmates was held in the afternoon to elect a new senior. It is customary in Russian prisons for the inmates to choose one of their number to regulate relations between prisoners and authorities, to distribute food, to keep a schedule of rotation in the performance of chores, and so forth. Much to my surprise, I was nominated by one of the murderers and seconded by the leading Chinaman. I obtained a couple of votes more than the thieves’ candidate, and was duly elected to the office of cell senior. The procedure thus followed a fairly usual practice in Russian elections; for the less a person is known, the better his chance of election, as he has fewer enemies among the elec-

torate. (On the same principle, several years later, I was chosen to preside over a committee appointed to unite two important societies of Russian workingmen in New York.) The thieves put up as their candidate the admirer of the Kerenskii régime, but were outvoted by what appeared to be a block of the Chinese and the murderers.

In the evening Chang, the kingpin of the Chinese group, asked me to join him for a cup of tea. We squatted around a wooden box which served as a table for meals, and consumed quantities of small cups of sugarless tea. Chang spoke broken English and indicated to me that he would prefer to conduct the conversation in that language, as he did not want to be understood by the other inmates.

After beating about the bush and asking various leading questions to find out who I was and to what extent I could be trusted, Chang got down to brass tacks and explained that the thieves were a great nuisance to the Chinese. It appeared that the Chinese were the wealthy part of the population of the cell, as they had friends in the city who supplied them with bread and tea, and from time to time were even generous enough to include candy and sugar. In comparison with the rest of the prisoners, they were living in the lap of luxury. The thieves, though also fairly well off as regards food, were not satisfied with the supplies they were receiving from the members of their gang still at large, and were making an almost nightly practice of pilfering from the bags of the Chinese. Some attempt at resistance was made by the more virile members of the Chinese group, but it was of no avail. The gangsters used fine group-combat tactics, and were more numerous as well as more pugnacious. Every engagement resulted in a complete defeat of the Chinese.

"You are now the senior of this cell, sir," concluded Chang, "and we look to you for protection in accordance with Russian prison custom, which forbids stealing between inmates."

I knew about the prison custom, part of the unwritten law of Russian penitentiaries, but at first I did not quite see by what means I could persuade the gang to abandon their evil ways and bring their conduct into line with prison ethics. It was quite obvious that no verbal efforts on my part would accomplish the desired end, and that I should have to enforce the prison code through the use of some form of coercion. As usual, might had to be used to restore right. As I turned the matter over in my mind, it occurred to me that the only useful solution of the problem lay in the formation of a group of people who would have a definite material interest in defending the

Chinese against the pickpockets, and, incidentally, in restoring the sadly deficient ethics of our cell. The way to the stars obviously led over a considerable amount of rough ground, which had to be smoothed by some very realistic method.

Efrem, a big blond Siberian from the Angara Valley, who was awaiting sentence for the murder of his unfaithful wife, had much influence with the group of murderers. He was a former quartermaster of the old Russian navy, and on this ground felt quite friendly toward myself and the aviator, whom he regaled with endless yarns about his service in the submarines during the war. I decided to discuss my idea with him, and drew him off into a corner under pretext of showing him an old newspaper which carried an article on Soviet criminal law. When we were settled in comparative privacy, I told Efrem about my talk with the Chinaman and asked him whether an additional daily ration of a pound of bread with a couple of lumps of sugar and some tea would prove acceptable to his friends. Without a moment's hesitation Efrem declared that extra rations were always acceptable, particularly now, when a fellow was not getting any food from outside (from "freedom," in *muzhik* parlance). "Every mother's son would do a lot nowadays for a pound of bread a day. It's a great idea! Things were getting dull—now we'll have some fun, and food in our bellies on top of that. I'll talk it over with the boys. I'm sure I can line them up."

Next day Efrem and I had another talk and were in sight of an arrangement satisfactory to all parties concerned—with the exception of the pickpockets. I was in a fair way towards the formation of a small mercenary army. The Chinese problem was to be settled in the Chinese manner, and my rôle was that of condottiere, lansquenet, captain—or what will you!

Chang endorsed the plan and solemnly agreed on behalf of all his nationals to furnish Efrem and his friends, as well as the aviator and myself, with one pound of bread per day, one pound of sugar and two ounces of tea per month until the end of the agreement, which was made for three months and was to be reviewed a fortnight before the expiration of its term. Both sides were entirely satisfied with the arrangement. The only person with any misgivings was the originator of the plan, who had considerable doubts as to its feasibility. I was not at all sure that Efrem would be able to inspire his followers with a warlike spirit, and thought it more than likely that the murderers would concentrate on getting their promised supplies, and omit to

fulfill their part of the contract. The whole matter hinged on a somewhat intangible factor—the honesty and self-respect of a gang of murderers!

However, the business end of the deal relating to the sinews of war was settled, and I had now to give my attention to the staff work and tactics. After several quiet talks with Efrem and the aviator, I decided to divide our forces into two groups and put each of them in charge of a group. The groups were to keep as close together as possible during the night, one occupying the corner opposite the Chinese, the other placed along the wall, between the Chinese and the first group. Efrem and the aviator explained the details of operation to their respective troops. Having thus laid the groundwork of the campaign, I collected bread, sugar, and tea from Chang and deposited them in my bag, making no distribution to the men. This was safer from two points of view—avoiding the suspicion of the gangsters and improving the fighting value of the troops. It has been said that a soldier fights and marches on his stomach, but by delaying distribution I intended to convey a hint of “who does not fight, does not eat.”

After supper I announced my desire to hold a meeting of the inmates, and as soon as the prisoners were ready to give me their attention I made a brief speech thanking them for the honor extended to me by my election as cell senior and intimating that I intended to take my duties seriously and to see to it that the usual prison code, adhered to by generations of prisoners, should prevail during the period of my administration. The sensational part of my address was directly concerned with the question of theft by inmates from other inmates. “This is a disgrace to our cell and an injustice to our fellow prisoners. The traditions of Russian prisons do not recognize community ownership of the prisoners’ food and personal belongings. Whatever our political opinions may be, the prison is not one hundred percent commune. Private property is recognized and respected. Anyone who steals, from now on, will be summarily dealt with in accordance with prison custom.”

This was a bombshell to the gangsters. They were by now aware that something was going on between Chang, Efrem, and myself, but had no idea that I had decided to throw down the gauntlet and had sufficient backing to defy them.

There were catcalls and jeers from the thieves.

“Blast your eyes, you side-kick of a bunch of yellow Chinks! Do you think you can tell us what’s right or wrong? To hell with the

bourjoui! What does he know about prison, anyway? Just try and stop us! There's plenty of room for you on the Cemetery Hill behind the prison!"

Meekness was certainly not one of their shortcomings, and in spite of the lip service paid to Kerenskii, there was no intention of running away from a fight. The lights were turned off and the prisoners settled themselves on the floor for the night, using their coats and shabby sheepskins as bedding or as protection against the cold harshness of the stone flags. I joined the aviator's group in the corner opposite the Chinese, and pretended to fall asleep.

For a while complete quiet prevailed, and I began to feel drowsy and had difficulty in keeping awake. It must have been about two hours later when the prisoners' slumbers were rudely interrupted by a frantic yell from one of the Chinamen, whose satchel was being rifled by one of the gangsters. In a jiffy we were all wide awake, and the fun started.

The Chinese set upon the offender in a body. Lights were turned off in the cell, but enough moonlight filtered through the barred window to permit me to see dimly what was happening. The gangster was in a sad plight, as the yellow brotherhood pinned down his arms and legs and started pounding his body with boots, bare fists, and any object that lay handy. The gang rushed to the help of their colleague and quickly drove the Chinese pell-mell into their corner, with little respect for Marquis of Queensberry rules.

Then came our turn. Efrem's bunch advanced with a rush and took the thieves in the flank. The gangsters were stout-hearted fellows and put up a good resistance against this attack. Almost noiselessly the tight knot of men swayed to and fro. The only accompaniment to an otherwise silent struggle were the grunts, heavy breathing, and suppressed wails of anguish from badly mauled fighters. The whole thing was suggestive of a battle of rats in a cellar—a terrifying, inhuman struggle of animals battling for a bone.

It was no time, however, for abstract meditation, as the issue hung in the balance. I signaled to the aviator and joined the group in a rush on the rear of the thieves. As to what followed I am a little vague. In the first impetus of the attack I brought down one of the gangsters, but he pulled me with him and we rolled over and over in a close embrace. As I was on the point of being suffocated, the cell was suddenly flooded with light. The guards had heard the noise of the scuffle and were shooting in the air over our heads. The prisoners scuttled to

their various corners, leaving three bodies on the spot where the battle had raged. All three were members of the gang. They were carried to the prison hospital.

Next day, a perfunctory investigation was made by the assistant warden. As usual in such cases, nothing was revealed as to the cause of the tumult. Each prisoner stoutly repeated the same formula: He was sound asleep when it all started, and found himself being attacked by persons whom he could not identify, owing to the darkness. My status as senior of the cell involved me in greater difficulties than the rest, but my alibi held good. I was a newcomer and hardly knew the names of the inmates, their private vendettas being entirely beyond my ken. I had tried to restore order but was knocked down by an unknown assailant. All of us were put on bread and water for three days, and I was hauled before the warden for a formal reprimand, and given three days' solitary confinement in the small cold cell reserved for such punishments.

By the time I returned to my old cell, the whole picture had changed. The three gangsters sent to hospital had not returned, two having been liberated. The remaining members were now thoroughly cowed and unable to stage a come-back.

Chang received me very courteously and expressed his sorrow that I should have been inconvenienced by strict confinement, entertained me at tea and fed me innumerable slices of white bread, candied fruit, and other delicacies such as I had not tasted for months. Efrem reported that all was quiet on the front, and that the Chinese were fulfilling their side of the bargain.

Two weeks later I was transferred to another cell and, much to my regret, had to part with the Chinese fleshpots and my faithful army. I carried away with me a sound respect for the character of Efrem and his fellow murderers, and a very kindly memory of Chang's tea parties.

THE KRASNOIARSK DILEMMA

THE transfer from the “criminal” to the “intellectual” cell was a great boon. Particularly during the first days I felt very happy to be with a cultured group, to be able to discuss things on the level of educated people and even to find old friends among the prisoners.

That cell was reached, however, not directly from the one in which I organized a mercenary army to protect the Chinese, but by way of another, populated by soldiers, peasants, and workers accused of either having served as volunteers in the White army or having participated in activities against the Bolsheviks. These people were a very decent lot, and much appreciated what little I was able to do for them to break the tedium of incarceration. I offered to hold two classes daily—one in geography, the other in arithmetic. Each of these classes was joined by about twenty students, and I worked with each about an hour a day. After three weeks I was removed to the “intellectual” cell. While I was glad to have been associated with these simple, straightforward folk in contrast to the weeks with pickpockets, the physical aspects of life in that cell were highly unpleasant. If I remember correctly, there were forty-nine prisoners in a room built to house only eleven. For the first few days I had to sleep in close proximity to the foul and infamous *parasha*. The experience was one of the vilest I have ever gone through.

The day my transfer to the “intellectual” cell was announced, my pupils presented me, by way of a parting gift, with a complete change of clean underclothing, two pairs of socks, a needle, some thread, and two pounds of bread. These people were themselves the poorest of the poor and had absolutely nothing to expect from me in the future. I shall never forget their kindness to a perfect stranger who had only tried to make their days in prison a little more bearable. I left the cell

with a much higher opinion of human nature than I had had before I entered the massive portals of the Irkutsk Prison.

The "intellectual" cell included several people I knew quite well. There were a few naval officers who had served in the Kama Flotilla, a general staff Colonel and even an old General, who in days gone by had guarded the person of the Tsar at Tsarskoe Selo.

Life in this cell was uneventful. The only interruptions in the dull routine were the fairly numerous examinations of its inmates by the Cheka officials. Several of the prisoners had been in Admiral Kolchak's train at the time of his arrest, and were therefore looked upon by the Cheka as particularly important politically.

When I think of their mood, I realize now how completely broken they were by long, frequent examinations, by complete uncertainty as to their fate, by imprisonment with its concomitant undernourishment and—perhaps most of all—by the utter despair caused by the complete defeat of the White movement in Siberia.

Even the staunchest among them reproached themselves for ever having participated in the Civil War, and regarded the Soviet Government as the legitimate government of Russia, which they were willing to serve loyally and without any mental reservations should they be liberated and permitted to participate in the rebuilding of the country. This state of mind cannot be dismissed as having been caused by the fear of possible execution at the hands of the Cheka. Most of these people were brave *cadre* officers who had proven their mettle in many a battle, some of them having been repeatedly wounded in the World War as well as in the Civil War. But now there was no backbone left; they were utterly crushed. They kept repeating a thought conveyed to me by Admiral Altvater in 1918: "The spirit of the nation is with the Bolsheviki. They have succeeded in maintaining the unity of Russia. We were fools to go against the will of the people. We never had a chance of winning, and now we are but dust."

Since these were a fair cross-section of the more intelligent officers of the Siberian White forces, I believe that I may legitimately generalize my discussions with them into a statement that the Soviet Government had nothing to fear from its former enemies and that it would have been easy to make of them useful members of the Soviet community. They had accepted their defeat, and were the first to blame themselves for it.

One striking exception to this attitude was presented by my friend and fellow officer in the Imperial Naval Guards—Lieutenant Commander Trubchaninov, aide to Admiral Kolchak—who was arrested

together with his chief when General Janin sullied the good name of the French army by the treacherous extradition of the Admiral to the revolutionary elements at Irkutsk. His spirit remained unbroken. Time and again he repeated: "I shall never submit to these scoundrels. I shall escape one way or another to America and live there as a free man, and not as a slave of the Bolsheviki."

His remarkable courage and self-possession made a tremendous impression on me at that time, and I was delighted to learn later of his spectacular escape to Vladivostok and subsequent arrival in the United States. At the present moment he is a successful chemical engineer. If any human being ever forged his own fate, it was Trubchaninov.

Old General Popov was a pathetic figure. He was a deeply religious man, and in prison became a mystic. To him the whole Revolution, beginning with the events of March 1917, represented the apocalyptic advent of the Beast. He lived in utter despair, and believed that the whole world would be swallowed up in the tide of godless communism and that in our generation the Christian religion would disappear from the face of the earth.

Popov's wife, a gentle, simple old soul, visited him as often as prison regulations permitted and sent him parcels of food obtained by bartering her last few jewels.

His death was as tragic as his life in prison. About a fortnight after my transfer to the "intellectual" cell, Popov, in company with some other prisoners considered by the Cheka as more important, was sent to Omsk to be tried at a demonstration trial (the forerunner of the famous political trials of recent years) together with some of the Kolchak ministers and other important personages. Before Popov left the prison, his wife brought him a large ham as provision for the journey to Omsk. Later, at the Krasnoiarsk Concentration Camp, I learned of the rôle that ham played in bringing about his death. Captain Z., who traveled from Irkutsk in the same train, told me the story of Popov's end: "We left Irkutsk in a special prison car with barred windows, under escort of Hungarian soldiers of the International Brigade. One of these Hungarians noticed the ham General Popov had, and took it away from him. Popov was very angry, as he had no other food, and threatened to complain to the authorities upon reaching Krasnoiarsk. The soldier cursed him roundly and answered: 'All right, we'll see how you'll complain at Krasnoiarsk!' The next night when the train stopped for some reason between stations, the soldiers of the escort told Popov to come outside as the Commandant of the train

wanted to see him. A few minutes later we heard a rifle shot. The Hungarian who stole the ham almost immediately returned to the car and announced that Popov had attempted to escape and had been killed by the sentry. 'Now he won't be able to complain about the ham.' "

A few weeks after Popov, Rakitin, and some of the other prisoners regarded as more important had been moved to Omsk, we learned that a large number of those remaining at the Irkutsk prison would soon be moved to Krasnoiarsk. There was a great deal of speculation as to which was better—to be moved to Krasnoiarsk or to remain at Irkutsk. If I remember correctly, the majority felt that it would be safer to stay at Irkutsk and that obviously those that were to be sent to Krasnoiarsk came from the group which the Cheka regarded as good material for an exhibition trial or as possible victims of the execution squads. On the other hand the régime at the Irkutsk Prison was not bad, as things were in Soviet Russia those days. The warden was a decent old man, a former political prisoner himself; the lower personnel of the prison consisted mostly of men who had served in the same capacity under the old régime. They treated political prisoners politely, without any attempt at bullying or making their life more unpleasant than called for by the prison regulations.

The filth in the cells, of course, was indescribable. Floors were not once scrubbed during the entire time I spent at the Irkutsk prison. We were permitted to take a hot bath and to wash our linen only once a month. The water supply in the cells was so limited that it was impossible to perform any morning or evening ablutions. With the best of luck one could get enough to wash one's teeth. As a consequence we were all covered with lice and an epidemic was rampant among the prisoners. We knew, however, that elsewhere in Siberia prison conditions were no better in this respect, and were afraid that instead of a humane warden and tolerable turnkeys we might, in another prison, be at the mercy of a band of internationalist Red Guards under some petty tyrant.

When we were told to parade for roll call, and the names of Trubchaninov and those of Kolchak's other aides were read from the list of those who were to go to Krasnoiarsk, our theory seemed to be confirmed, since Trubchaninov and the other members of Kolchak's personal staff were regarded by the prisoners as "important" from the Cheka viewpoint. I also heard my own name called, and maneuvered to stand in line as near as possible to Trubchaninov so that we would be in the same car during the trip. Those that were left behind were

rejoicing for themselves and commiserating with their friends told off for Krasnoiarsk.

We were divided into squads and marched off on foot under a heavily armed escort to the railway station. Prison cars awaited us there and we were distributed through them in the order of our grouping in the column of march. I was fortunate enough to get into the same car as Trubchaninov and another aide of Admiral Kolchak. At the time I did not know how lucky I was to be assigned to the same car. During the more than three days' trip to Krasnoiarsk we received as rations only one herring per day and one pound of bread for the entire journey. It was therefore a real godsend that one of Kolchak's aides was given a very ample food parcel by his relatives just before we left prison. He generously shared his food with Trubchaninov and me. To eat a slice of ham, or a home-made meat pie was to me a veritable Lucullian feast after months of existence on the crude and meager prison ration. The car was not more uncomfortable than the prison cell, and I settled down to the routine of that journey with a certain amount of satisfaction. It seemed to me that anything new and different was better than the deadly monotony of prison life. As I still held fast to my optimistic idea that nothing dire was likely to befall me, I was not particularly worried at the prospect of Krasnoiarsk and was still hopeful that I should soon be liberated.

In the same car there was a group of rather peculiar-looking people whom I was not able to classify at first. Later I realized that they were former agents of the counter-espionage service and plainclothes men of the political police of the Whites. They were in a very subdued mood and quite pessimistic as to what fate had in store for them at Krasnoiarsk.

The most interesting personality in that group was a small dark fellow, well dressed, in city clothes of the cut worn at that time by shopkeepers and small business men in general. My bunk was opposite his and I soon became acquainted with him. He would not admit that he had had any connection with the Whites and insisted on his status as a business man.

"I wanted to take a train from Irkutsk to Mysovaia where I had business interests. I got on the train all right and we were waiting to start, when in walks a group of chekists who began to inspect documents again, although they had already been examined before we boarded the train. I was hauled out and kept in prison ever since. On what grounds, I don't know."

He was an active, energetic fellow, and the first night out he con-

fided to me his plans to escape, inviting me to join. I refused because of my physical condition being so undermined by the long period of undernourishment that I could not hope to survive even a moderately long march through the *taiga*. He then asked me to treat our conversation as strictly confidential, but did not give up his plans and continued his attempt to organize a group to make a break for freedom. As far as I could judge, he succeeded in recruiting some six or seven people and was quite ready to carry his scheme into execution by attacking the sentry when he opened the door to hand in the evening bucket of water.

He had to give up his plan, however, because one of the men he discussed the plan with got frightened and told him that the escape of a few would endanger the lives of all the other prisoners, who would very likely be killed by the enraged guards. This man threatened him that unless he was given a promise that there would be no attempt at escape, he would tell the other prisoners and organize a watch over him or even report the matter to the chief of the escort.

At one of the railway stations en route to Krasnoiarsk, I noticed a group of British army officers captured by the Reds, walking on the platform which was somewhat perfunctorily guarded by a few sentries. As one of the Britishers approached our car I asked him, in English, to stand with his back to the window at which I was sitting and to listen carefully to what I had to say to him. He complied with my request, and I whispered, giving my name: "Former lieutenant, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. If you succeed in regaining freedom within the next few months, please report to the Admiralty that I am held at Krasnoiarsk and ask them to do what they can to get me out. I don't want to tell the Reds I'm a former British naval officer. Probably complicate my case and delay my liberation. But about five or six months from now I'd be glad of any outside help I can get. Perhaps the Admiralty will take some interest, since I'm a former naval officer."

The Britisher asked me to spell my full name and the date when I was gazetted, and promised to do as I asked him.

Meanwhile the Cheka representative who was in charge of our train had approached and noticed that I was talking English. He immediately asked, "Are you an Englishman too?"

After a moment's hesitation, I said, "No, Comrade Komissar, but I know a little English and was asking the British officer to give me a package of cigarettes if he could spare one."

I probably acted rightly in suppressing my connection with Great

Britain. An affirmative answer would have led to the reopening of my case and perhaps to an accusation of espionage and probable execution. I cannot deny that for a fraction of a second I was much tempted to take the risk, in the hope of exchanging the filthy prison car for the fairly comfortable life of the British prisoners. Subsequent events proved that I was right in not giving way to that impulse. I was free long before the British officers whom I had met at that small Siberian station. They were still at one of the prisoners' camps near Moscow when I was already free and laying the foundations for my escape abroad.

These clean, well-dressed men strolling up and down the sunlit platform smoking their pipes, talking calmly to each other and completely ignoring the sentries and the komissars, were to me like a vision from another world. I longed to join them, but forced myself to turn away and resume an interrupted conversation with Trubchaninov about the details of the ignominious surrender of Kolchak to the Reds by General Janin.

As we reached Krasnoiarsk a trainful of Baltic Fleet bluejackets were being unloaded. They were to man the gunboats on the Enisei. For the first time since I had left Petrograd in 1918 I saw an Imperial naval officer in the service of the Red navy. He was a shy, thin youngster in a black officer's greatcoat without shoulder straps, his cockade wrapped in red cotton. He made a show of attempting to direct the work of unloading the train, but it was obvious that the men were paying no attention to him and doing very much as they pleased.

After we in our turn detrained and were marching in the pleasant spring air along the dusty road to the concentration camp on the outskirts of the city, several truckloads of bluejackets passed us. Brawny men in striped blue-and-white singlets, their gray-black greatcoats draped on their shoulders in the revolutionary fashion in vogue among the seamen from 1917 on, they sang lustily some mocking couplets about the White Guards. I tried to see whether there were any familiar faces among them, but the trucks were traveling fast and raising clouds of dust and I was unable to distinguish one from another. Despite their jeering, I was glad to see those bluejackets. They reminded me of the sea, of the old *Rossia*, of the *Strashnyi*, of the good times in the West Indies, of Toulon and Brest, of a life when both officers and men were sailing under the flag of St. Andrew. I felt no enmity toward these big, simple men who were jeering at me, though I felt rather sorry for their officer.

At the concentration camp, which was a large affair constructed during the World War to house prisoners of war, we were placed in one of the two guardhouses, which had a number of cells located in two corridors opening on a small piazza, divided by a heavy iron grille from the quarters of the men of the guard and the rooms occupied by the chancery of the camp. Practically all of us newcomers were located in one of the corridors, while the other was occupied almost entirely by agents of the counter-espionage service and political police of the Whites. The cells in the center, opening on the piazza, were tenanted by a group of former generals. There were altogether about two hundred prisoners incarcerated in that guardhouse. Egorov, the active fellow who had planned to escape from the train, and some of his friends were not with us. They were taken from the station to the Krasnoiarsk Prison.

On the first day, the election of senior prisoner—*starosta*—was held, and to my surprise I found myself elected to that exalted post.

In a way I was glad of it, as in the capacity of *starosta* I had a little more communication with the outside world through contact with former prisoners now working in the camp chancery, who then enjoyed comparative freedom and were fairly well posted as to what was going on and even as to the intentions of the Cheka with regard to the prisoners, since they were in a position to overhear a great deal of the Chekists' discussions while performing their clerical duties.

At Krasnoiarsk the contact with the outside world was much closer than at Irkutsk. One of the army officers who had attached himself to the Naval Regiment somewhere near Krasnoiarsk on our march east in December came to visit me. He told me that he was now connected with a White guerilla located some hundred miles south of Krasnoiarsk and that he would be glad to help me reach them should I succeed in escaping. He gave me an address in the city where I could hide until an opportune moment presented itself to join the guerilla.

This was a very tempting offer, but I still held fast to my theory that nothing drastic was going to happen to me and that I should soon be liberated by the Cheka, since there was no evidence in their files against me.

We were even more crowded at the guardhouse than at the Irkutsk Prison. There was not room for all of us to stretch ourselves out on the floor, and some of the prisoners had to sleep squatting along the walls. The food was even worse than at Irkutsk and the rations of bread smaller.

My first activity in my capacity of *starosta* was directed toward the organization of an equitable and fair distribution of the hunger rations doled out to us. I worked out a system whereby bread loaves were divided as evenly as possible without accurate scales, and were then marked with numbers by one of the cell seniors, in my presence. Then each of the other cell seniors was asked to call out a number, and received the part of a loaf bearing the number called. Soup and gruel were ladled out by me personally into cell mess kits, and cell seniors took their turns in watching the operation. Whatever surplus remained was allotted to the different cells in order of number, each taking its turn for one day.

On the whole the prisoners were fairly well satisfied with this system and acknowledged that I did not attempt to favor my own cell or to appropriate any food for my own individual consumption. There were, however, one or two who held the opposite view.

One of the prisoners in particular plagued me about food distribution, constantly accusing me of giving my own cell more food than others, without however bringing up any concrete instances of my malfeasance. By that time my nerves were in a rather frayed state. I had considerable difficulty in controlling myself when confronted daily with these unfounded accusations. One day, when I came to hand over to my accuser's senior the surplus of soup, he shouted, "He took half of it for his own cell, I'm certain. Look how little there is left over for us today!"

This made me furious and I clapped him on the head with a mess kit containing some liquid gruel. He took it quite meekly and merely whined that I had nearly blinded him with the hot gruel. None of the other men of the cell protested, being obviously satisfied that their fellow prisoner got what was coming to him, and not even grudging the waste of food intended for them.

Another occupation of mine was an attempt to maintain a certain standard of cleanliness, and to insist on the daily sweeping of floors in the cells and corridors. The majority of the prisoners willingly cooperated with me in this respect. The generals, however, were an exception. They were much older than the rest of us, and the starvation diet had reduced them to a very low level of activity. Most of the time they sat in complete silence, hardly ever moving from their places. Their cells were unswept and filthy.

In the morning I would walk up to their cells and say: "Your Excellencies, would you please be good enough to sweep the floor of your cell and clean it up as best you can. It is better for you to do it volun-

tarily without waiting for the camp authorities to inflict disciplinary punishment upon you for failure to keep your cell clean. Please help me carry out my duty."

Some old warrior, a former division or brigade commander, would get up and start sweeping the floor rather ineffectually, with feeble strokes of a broom.

In the first few weeks at Krasnoiarsk I struck up a friendship with a former White officer living in freedom in the city and employed at the camp chancery. Vrevskii was a young man of good family, a former officer of the Guards. We found we had a number of mutual friends and came to know each other quite well.

This youngster was very well informed about camp affairs and knew some of the sergeants of the guard, who were largely recruited from men who had formerly served in the First Siberian army of the Whites or in the Naval Rifles Regiment which had participated in the Krasnoiarsk rebellion in December.

Through him I came to know a couple of guard sergeants, and soon discovered that one of them had served as a volunteer in the Naval Rifle Regiment. He had heard of me and was interested in helping me as much as he could.

This man, Andreev, used to call me out, under pretext of checking lists of prisoners, and talk with me for a few minutes every time he took his turn of mounting guard at the camp. According to him, most of the men were dissatisfied with their service in the Red army and had taken part in the Krasnoiarsk rebellion largely at the instigation of their Colonel, who was a Lett and an officer of the General Staff apparently in touch with Vatsetis, the Lettish Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet forces, and perhaps with other Letts high in the councils of the Red army. The element of disillusionment in the White movement also played a part, as well as the desire to save their skins when they finally lost faith in the ultimate victory of the Whites.

"This did not make us Reds, however," said he one day. "We can't avoid wearing the red star on our caps, but that's as far as we go. We still think kindly of our friends in the White army and we're sorry for you fellows behind the bars."

In the corridor occupied by the Counter-Espionage and Secret Police, the senior was a former Lieutenant Colonel of the Gendarmes. I knew him slightly as he had been assistant to the chief of the Naval Counter-Espionage Service for a short while. All my dealings with the prisoners in that corridor were through him, and he seemed to enjoy a great deal of influence with all his former colleagues.

Once, after the distribution of food, I told him that I had met his former chief, Colonel Kafarov, head of the Naval Counter-Espionage Service, in the anteroom of the Irkutsk Cheka, when he came to surrender himself to the Red authorities. In commenting upon that encounter I said I was surprised that a man with his past, and the long service in the ranks of the Gendarmes under the old régime, apparently did not possess enough will power to try to escape, or at least to live in hiding. By surrendering he had forfeited all chances of saving his life.

On that occasion I had told Kafarov: "You'd better get out of here right away before they notice you."

"I cannot live with a false passport any longer. This constant hiding makes me so nervous that I simply can't go on. Possibly they will let me live in return for voluntary surrender."

"You'll be shot for a certainty," I retorted. "Don't stay here a second longer!"

"No," replied Kafarov, "I'd rather meet my fate, whatever it may be."

Kafarov's former assistant listened silently to me and remarked as I finished, "We, who formerly enforced the law, find it particularly difficult to live the lives of fugitives from justice. It's a matter of psychology."

After a few weeks at Krasnoiarsk I learned from Vrevskii that the Cheka had reached a decision to execute within the next few days all the inmates of the corridor populated by the counter-espionage agents. Vrevskii said that he had overheard quite definite remarks to that effect by one of the examiners of the Cheka, and that the only hope for these men lay in an attempt to escape. He suggested that I speak to Andreev and sound him out as to whether he was prepared to coöperate.

A few minutes later I succeeded in attracting Andreev's attention as he completed the taking over of the guard from his predecessor.

"I just learned," I said, "that the Cheka intend to shoot all these chaps in the counter-espionage corridor next week."

"Hell, that's a shame!"

"Are you willing to help?"

"How?"

"Suppose they attempted to escape the next time you're on duty, what position would you take?"

"Well, I'm liable to be shot myself, as you well know."

"Suppose they stage a struggle and gag you and your men, wound-

ing one or two perhaps to give the whole thing a genuine flavor?"

Andreev promised to think it over and tell me later.

In the evening he came to the grille, called me out and said he had mentioned our conversation to two or three former White volunteers among his men. They had decided to take a chance and help their former comrades to escape, but as there were two Bolsheviks in his squad they must be killed by the prisoners at the outset, as otherwise they would give evidence against him and his friends. Two of the volunteers were prepared to join the prisoners and go with them through the *taiga* to the hiding-place of the White guerilla.

Shortly before retreat was sounded I went to see the senior of the counter-espionage corridor and told him about the news I had learned from Vrevskii; also about the chances of help from the men of the guard in case he and his men decided to escape. He cross-examined me closely about the location of the White guerilla and how well I knew Andreev and Vrevskii. I told him that of course I was not running a general staff in prison and that all my information was mere hearsay and not checked for accuracy through reliable sources, but that I thought the news sounded authentic enough since, sooner or later, all counter-espionage agents would be put to death anyhow, and the executions were merely a matter of time. As to Andreev, he seemed a good fellow, sincere and willing to assist, but I had not known him before and had no idea whether he would actually help. In spite of all that, I urged him to persuade his men to make the attempt, as even should they be killed trying to overpower the soldiers or making their way through the *taiga*, it was better for them to die fighting than be shot in a Cheka cellar or in some ravine near the outskirts of the camp.

The next day, after the distribution of bread, the gendarme told me that during the night and early morning he had discussed the news with the cell seniors and some of the former gendarmerie officers among the prisoners.

"They've decided to take a chance. But there's one condition: that you'll take command and lead us to the guerilla."

"I'm honored," I replied, "but I don't quite see why I should accept the offer. My situation is very different from yours; I expect to be liberated very shortly, while your fate is sealed unless you make the break. Furthermore, most of your group have been receiving food from friends and relatives in the city, while I have had to live on prison rations and as a result I'm unfit for any physical effort."

"My men realize this, but they say that you are the only man they'd

trust. You've had experience in guerilla warfare in the *taiga* and you'd be able to get us to that White guerilla you talked about."

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I know for a certainty that I am unable to walk a mile and probably quite unable to run at all. I might just as well commit suicide."

The gendarme went back to his cell; and later in the day, when I called him get his ration of soup, he said: "We've talked it over again. The men have definitely decided not to make any attempt to escape as long as you refuse to lead them. They feel that, since you expect to be liberated, they have no reason to believe this news about their execution. They know that you have held an important position at Omsk, and if you have any hopes, they've more chance than you of getting through."

This rather infuriated me: "You people will be executed for the same reason as Kafarov was—because you have no sense. First you yourselves tell the Cheka that you worked for the counter-espionage service, then you refuse to believe that you'll be shot, in spite of all the Bolshevik declarations of amnesty and the specific statements that counter-espionage, intelligence, and propaganda men are not included in its terms. If you don't want to escape, that's up to you. I cannot take command of the group, for the reasons I gave you yesterday."

"The men say they'll carry you if you can't walk. They need your brain, not your legs. It's your experience and your knowledge of the *taiga* that's so important to them."

At that I laughed, rather bitterly: "I've fought in the Civil War for some time and I know the value of such promises. They mean well, of course. But they are not really good guerilla material. As soon as the first shots are fired and they hear the bullets whistle, they'll drop me and run."

The next day I learned that my advice was not heeded and the counter-espionage men had decided against an attempt at a jail-break. From a purely egotistical angle, this was quite a relief to me personally, for I knew that in the case of their successful escape there was quite a possibility that the Cheka would avenge themselves on other prisoners, particularly on cell seniors such as myself.

When I think of it now it strikes me as very surprising how little thought I gave to this matter once the decision was reached. I felt I had done my duty as a *starosta* and a former White officer in warning them and in devising a plan for their escape. As long as they did not want to follow my proposal there was nothing I could do for them.

The next time I saw Vrevskii I told him to inform Andreev that there would be no attempt at escape and to thank him for his promise of help. Vrevskii then informed me that Egorov had been executed the night before.

"The purge is under way. A special committee is coming next week from Omsk to inspect the prisons and camps. Another went to Irkutsk for the same purpose two days ago."

Later I learned that as a result of the activities of that committee at Irkutsk quite a few people at the prison there were executed, since in the opinion of the committee the local Cheka had not acted drastically enough.

By a strange chain of circumstances I was liberated just a day before the execution of the counter-espionage service men. As far as I was able to ascertain, all of them were shot.

Trubchaninov was transferred to the camp from the guardhouse and given some work in the garage, and this led to his finding a chance to escape later. Most of the other naval officers who were with me at Irkutsk and Krasnoiarsk were liberated later and given work in different Soviet bureaus.

As far as I know, the only officer executed of the Naval Regiment who served under me was Zakharchenko. I was never able to learn the circumstances of his death. I did my best to find out what happened to him, but without success. His brother, who was living in America, was also unsuccessful in obtaining information. I am convinced, however, that he met his death at the hands of the Cheka, for I know that he was arrested about a month after my transfer to the Irkutsk prison. I heard that he had insisted on his right to freedom under our treaty with Zverev. It is possible that his insistence may have led to his death. He was by no means meek, and perhaps the Cheka thought that a man of his will power and obvious ability would be a danger to the Soviet Government. Zakharchenko was a very remarkable man, who would in normal times have risen to the top of his profession and made a great career for himself in the navy. He fell a victim to the Juggernaut of the Revolution like millions of other, less able men.

My friends at Krasnoiarsk told me that the counter-espionage men met their death stoically. Only one or two faltered and cried out for mercy. The others remained calm and died gamely.

UNEASY FREEDOM

ON A golden late summer day in 1920 I walked out through the gates of the bleak, dusty prisoners' camp of Krasnoiarsk. Freedom had come as unexpectedly as a lucky draw in the Irish Sweepstake.

A winding sandy road stretched from the camp to the city. Clumps of green grass here and there. A few pale, timid wildflowers. And a clean, cool, dry wind from the east. Nothing out of the ordinary, but to me it was beautiful beyond words. These months of filthy prison cells, foul air, and unwashed fellow prisoners had created in me an intense hunger for cleanliness, open spaces, grass, flowers, the smell of the earth.

The starvation diet of prison and camp had made me so weak that even the short stretch to the city was beyond my strength.

In spite of the subconscious urge to get away as fast and as far as possible from my place of imprisonment, my legs would not carry me. I felt faint and dizzy, and I had to sit down and rest.

I had no thoughts as yet for the next step. The present was so overwhelming, so different from the immediate past, that there was no place in my mind for the future. I was still reliving the intense moments of liberation and the farewell to my cellmates. I felt that I had tasted the very dregs of life, and that the future could hold nothing worse than my experience of the last few months. And the thought gave me tremendous confidence and strength. I had passed out through the gates of hell unbroken. Why worry, then, as to the morrow?

The minutes I sat by the roadside were among the most intense in my life. Each little incident added to the keen enjoyment of the moment.

A tiny russet butterfly fluttering around me. A sturdy Siberian peasant trundling along in a squeaky cart. A plebeian sparrow lighting almost at my feet to partake of the banquet spread out in the mid-

dle of the cart track. It was so unusual to me, so full of new significance. It all tended to confirm that I was free, that I could come and go at my own will, that I was at liberty to follow the butterfly's tinsel wings, to greet the peasant and pass the time of the day with him, or feed to the sparrows the few breadcrumbs left in my pocket from the daily prison ration. All very trite. Probably every day thousands of released prisoners the world over are experiencing the same feelings. But to me it was as deeply stirring as first love.

By easy stages, resting now and again on my way, I reached the house of Mrs. K., one of the few people at Krasnoiarsk whom I knew and who, through the good offices of the guards, had kept in touch with me. She, too, was a piece of flotsam left on the shores of the Enisei by the receding tide of Kolchak's White army.

I was warmly greeted by Mrs. K., who supplied me with clean linen and a decent suit of clothing, so that I could discard the lice-infested rags that had been my prison garb. I washed luxuriously with a cake of real soap—an unheard-of rarity in Siberia then—dressed, and was ready for a Lucullian feast of roast chicken, bread, and hot tea.

Feeling like a young colt that had tucked away an extra ration of oats, I sallied forth. I had no money at all and could not very well inflict myself indefinitely upon the hospitality of Mrs. K. The obvious thing was to look for some work. The talents and training of an ex-officer of the Imperial Naval Guards are not easily exchangeable for a meal ticket at a small Siberian town, and after turning over one plan after the other in my mind, I decided to try my luck with one of the survey parties which were doing work at the mouth of the Enisei. Their headquarters were located at Krasnoiarsk and I felt certain that I should find one or two former naval officers among their staff.

My surmise was correct. I discovered a couple of old chums at the musty office of the Enisei Survey. I was greeted enthusiastically. They were genuinely glad to see me, and offered tea and biscuits. They were anxious to help me, but their staff was complete and they were not in a position to take on any additional help until the beginning of the survey season in the spring. They promised, however, to see whether there was any chance of obtaining work on the Enisei steamers, and went out to talk it over with the management of the river fleet, leaving me happily ensconced in front of an open window with a tall glass of hot tea at my elbow.

The failure of my first attempt to secure work did not cast any gloom. I felt happy and at peace with the world as I sat sipping the weak tea and watching the occasional leisurely traffic of the street.

Two or three Red army soldiers in ragged khaki, with uncouth, red-starred helmets of khaki cloth. An old peasant woman carrying a load of potatoes. A couple of peasant carts.

Suddenly, into that symphony of drabness there burst a colorful group in navy blue and black. There were six of them. The terror of the Russian bourgeoisie—the vanguard and pride of the Revolution—bluejackets of the Baltic Fleet.

Their wide trousers were of elephantine proportions, sweeping dust off the sidewalk like so many brooms. Wide scarlet ribbons enlivened their funereal black pea-jackets thrown open on naked hairy chests, and the wide blue collars of their shirts struck an incongruous note in that forlorn Siberian city, thousands of miles from the open sea. The ribbons of their caps fluttered merrily in the breeze.

Cocks of the walk they were, and no mistake, and they were obviously directing their leisurely progress to the building of the Enisei Survey.

At first I did not connect them with the fact of my presence at the office. Then, realizing that in my position discretion was probably the better part of valor, I removed myself from the window, so as not to attract the attention of the merry men of the sea.

As they entered the hall, I heard a gruff voice which sounded vaguely familiar. "Where is that former lieutenant commander who was just released from camp? We heard that he came here an hour or so ago."

A heavy lump formed itself at the pit of my stomach, and I felt as though a black cloud had suddenly blotted out the sun. Apparently they were Baltic Sea bluejackets who had managed to track me down and had come to haul me before the Secret Police. Some of my former shipmates were, I knew, in a position to amplify very considerably the scant store of information as to my past at the disposal of the Krasnoiarsk Red authorities.

Thoughts of escape by the window flashed through my mind, but were abandoned. I was much too weak to hope to outrun these huskies of the Red navy, and I was unarmed. The only alternative, therefore, was to await further developments.

The next ten minutes seemed an endless agony. My few hours of freedom had affected me like a heady wine. The return to prison would be as death after resurrection.

The door flew open and the seamen crowded in. The leader of the band asked me in a stage whisper: "Is that you, Dimitrii Nikolaevich?"

And upon assent on my part: "We are all your former pupils at the

Petty Officers School of the *Rossiiia*. We are now with the Soviet Gunboat Flotilla on the Enisei. We heard some time ago from a boat-swain's mate who was with you at the Naval Regiment that you were at the camp and we've sort of kept an eye on you. We didn't want to come and see you there—might have got you into trouble. But now that you are free, we came to find out if we can be of any use."

One by one they came up and shook hands with me: Moroz of the Naval Guards, tall and square-shouldered. Medvedev, a stocky, thick-set diver, formerly the first stroke of my cutter; Pimenov, svelt, swarthy, and good-looking; and Mendelman, the Latvian, a blond, bearded giant. Then came Styrkhunov, agile as a monkey and just as fidgety; and Avdeiev, the taciturn Oldbeliever from the Upper Kama.

They were all very solemn and obviously not quite at their ease. Not having spoken to me since the Revolution, they were somewhat at a loss as to how to address me.

As there were only two chairs in the room, I suggested that we all sit on the floor just as we had squatted on the linoleum-covered deck of the *Rossiiia* during classes.

From the depth of his ample pea-jacket, Moroz produced a bottle of diluted grain alcohol. Mendelman contributed two smoked herrings, and several tin cups made their appearance from the pockets of the other men.

Avdeiev poured out the alcohol and dealt out slices of fish as *zakuska*. Then he rose and made a stilted little speech, something along the following lines:

"We all serve in the Red navy now. You were our chief in the old navy. Perhaps some day we shall again serve under you. We are glad you are free and wish you well. Here is to your health. Live a long and a happy life."

We all drank cupfuls of alcohol and munched our bits of smoked fish.

Moroz addressed me then with less formality: "It would be unsafe for you to remain here or, for that matter, anywhere in Siberia. There are too many people who know about you. Gradually word will go about that you are free and then who can tell what may happen?"

Mendelman produced a paper-wrapped parcel and opened it. A complete bluejacket's outfit was spread out on the floor.

Styrkhunov handed over to me a bundle of paper money and an official letter, stamped with the hammer-and-sickle seal of the Red Flotilla of the Enisei.

"Moscow has proclaimed a mobilization of merchant marine officers," continued Moroz. "We think it would be well for you to take this letter to the Red army headquarters and ask for traveling papers to report at Moscow as a merchant marine mate."

I glanced through the letter.

"To the Administrative Department of the H.Q. Fifth Army.

"This is to advise that the bearer is known to us as an expert navigator fully qualified for service in the merchant marine as a mate. In view of Moscow's insistence that all such specialists be expedited for service in the merchant marine, we suggest that the bearer should be sent to report at the head offices of the said marine."

No name was mentioned. Simply "bearer." It was a clever piece of work and would be invaluable to me.

"Dimitrii Nikolaevich, Mister Lieutenant Commander, you better see a friend of ours at the Administrative Department tomorrow. His name is Z. We have already spoken to him about you and he will do the necessary."

Avdeiev passed the bottle again.

"And now, before we leave, we want you to know that we wish from the bottom of our heart the best of luck and success to you. May we meet again."

I felt shaken to the depths of my being. The emotional stress of all this was almost too much for me. To know, after months of utter abasement at the prison, that there still were men who considered one a human being and not a yellow cur to be kicked, was great indeed.

I mastered myself sufficiently to blurt out a few incoherent words of thanks—that I should never forget their loyalty and kindness, that to me they were the soul of the old navy, still paramount under the Red banner of the Soviets.

The bottle was empty. The seamen got up and slowly filed out of the room, shaking me by the hand and giving me the old formula: "Stay in happiness, Dimitrii Nikolaevich."

Thus began and ended my first day of freedom in the land of the Soviets.

THE MAKING OF A MARXIST

IT TOOK me fully two days to pass through the various formalities at the headquarters of the Fifth Army in order to obtain the necessary permits and transportation documents for my trip to Moscow. I was going from one clerk to another as in a dream. It felt so different to be free, to be able to enter a room and leave it at will, to pass a sentry without paying any attention to him, to walk along the sunlit, untidy streets of autumnal Krasnoiarsk, to call on a few friends existing precariously in abandoned shops while trying to obtain permission to move to European Russia.

Most of the stores were closed and there was very little commercial activity in evidence. A restaurant or two still functioned and there was some little trading at the market place. To my great surprise I stumbled upon a bookstore well stocked with the latest Soviet publications. I had not read a new book for several months, and even my volume of Shelley had been taken away from me when we were moved from Irkutsk to Krasnoiarsk.

For almost an hour I stood before the window going over the titles of the books. I felt I simply had to buy a book, even if only one volume. I had very little money, perhaps not enough to keep me in food to Moscow, but I could not resist the temptation, and quickly worked out a perfectly good excuse for squandering some of my funds on reading matter.

"After all," I persuaded myself, "I'm about to start life in an entirely new and strange country, different from any I have ever known. This may be Russia, but a different Russia, with a new religion, new ways of thought, new attitudes toward the world. To survive in that world, I ought to know what are the ways of this new religion, of this new socialist creed. The quickest and safest way of acclimatizing myself to these new conditions is to buy and absorb the writings of some prominent Russian communist explaining his viewpoint."

Promptly I spied the very book I needed—Bukharin's *The ABC of*

Communism. I knew that Bukharin was a great man among the Bolsheviks, that Lenin was a personal friend of his and that he was regarded by his fellow party members as their leading philosopher and theoretician. My decision was quickly made. I entered the store and asked for a copy of Bukharin's book.

That volume apparently brought me luck, as documents were issued me the same afternoon, and their scrutiny revealed that no mention was made of my being a former prisoner of war. They merely stated "at the disposition of the Administrative Department of the Staff of the Fifth Army," and anyone could be at the disposition of that department: officers and soldiers, komissars, and clerks. It was a very fine set of documents, and I inwardly thanked Bukharin for providing me with such a potent amulet.

The transportation issued to me entitled me to travel in a "staff" car, which was a privilege I had not expected. The train was scheduled to leave the next morning and I hurried to say good-bye to my friends.

The next morning I started for the station almost at dawn, as I had heard that the demand for seats was tremendous, and decided not to take any chances. I had had enough of Siberia, and was anxious to get to Moscow or Petrograd, to a large city where I would not be conspicuous and in the recesses of which I could hide myself securely and build up strength for the final dash across the border. My feelings at that time were probably not very different from those of ordinary criminals who head toward a large metropolis for the same reason. And of course I was looking forward eagerly to seeing my parents again, both of whom were still alive at that time.

To my surprise I found that the door of the staff car was guarded by a sentry who examined my documents and admitted me upon finding that I was entitled to a seat. The days of Kerenskii freedom were obviously over, and privileged travelers had a chance to ride in comparative comfort without running the risk of being crowded out by the common run of passengers. This was quite different from what I had expected, and I sat down at one of the windows to watch the storming of the other cars by a milling mob of Red army soldiers, peasants, and city folk, who soon filled to overflowing the *teplushki* that made up the rest of the train.

Upon taking stock of my traveling companions, I came to the conclusion that, with few exceptions, I did not like them at all. Most of them were callow youngsters, well dressed either in peacetime officers' greatcoats of dove-gray cloth or in long cavalry-type soldiers' coats of the cut favored before the war by the cadets of the cavalry

schools. One of them was sporting a blue-and-white singlet and the white shirt with the wide blue collar of the navy, although there was nothing about him to remind one of a seafaring man, but rather a truant high-school boy masquerading as a seaman. The youngsters' voices were raucous and loud; they were agitated, constantly on the move, unable to settle down and relax. Their language was of the filthiest, and the presence in the car of several women, whom they all addressed by their first names, did not seem to restrain the flow of profanity. There were, however, several people of a distinctly different type in the carriage. A tall, stolid-looking Red army man in his forties was obviously cast in a different mold. He sat quietly smoking a short pipe and reading a newspaper. His worn, gray-brown greatcoat was clean and well brushed, and his topboots were shined to perfection. Even his heavy portmanteau seemed to come from a different world from the untidy bags and string-tied parcels forming the baggage of the boisterous youngsters. There were also two middle-aged men dressed in coarse but clean city clothes of the type worn by the factory workers before the Revolution. Although they obviously belonged to the same group as the youngsters, they were quite different from them in behavior, and struck me as skilled workers or foremen whom the Revolution had carried far from their factories without changing them very much. They were still industrial workers of a good type and did not belong in the noisy, garish crowd of their companions. The women were all young, none of them good-looking. They were dressed loudly but badly, practically all sporting the high-laced boots then in vogue with the Soviet upper-crust. One of them, a Jewish girl of about twenty-two or three, was obviously more cultured than the others.

Gradually I came to the realization that most of my fellow travelers were members of the various Siberian Chekas transferred to European Russia. As they told me later themselves, they were drafted to serve on the Crimean front against the forces of Baron Wrangel. The youth in the naval outfit was an ex-assistant commandant of a Cheka and assumed the duties of train commandant.

As soon as the train chugged out of the station and we started on our slow progress to Moscow, our self-styled Commandant made the rounds of the staff car checking the documents of passengers who did not belong to the Cheka group. I was aware that I must be a puzzle to him. At that time I was wearing an old black cloth naval jacket with cloth buttons, a naval cap without insignia, and wide black naval

trousers. My thin, pale face did not quite harmonize with the sea togs and still less did the book I was reading.

What he saw in my documents did not enlighten him very much and he continued to eye me with suspicion. After a while he sat down next to me and asked, "What are you reading, comrade?"

"You are probably familiar with the book. It is by Comrade Bukharin and is an excellent summary of the Marxist viewpoint."

The chekist took the book from me, turned over the pages for a while, attempted to read it, but soon gave up. Then he called out to his friends, "This comrade here has the latest book by Bukharin. Have any of you read it?"

They chorused a negative, and crowded around me.

"Won't you read it aloud? It would help to kill time," proposed a young Jew in an officer's coat. "We have no books. Do read it aloud, comrade!"

All this attention was most unwelcome from my point of view. To become thus the cynosure of all eyes was far from a boon when I was trying to be as inconspicuous as possible. However, I thought it impolitic to refuse, and trusting that I still remembered a few things from the days when I had studied the theory of Marxism and debated on it with my school chums, I made a counterproposal.

"Suppose we discuss the various points in Comrade Bukharin's book. I will first read half a page or so. Then I'll stop and give you a chance to ask questions which I will try to answer to the best of my ability. Afterwards we can all discuss the subject. To make the whole thing orderly, let's elect a chairman. I should like to propose the Red army comrade for the chairmanship."

My proposal met with unanimous approval. The Red army man, who turned out to be the Komissar of one of the divisions of the Fifth Army, was duly elected and we started to read and discuss Bukharin's opus. At that time there was no doubt whatsoever among those communists that Bukharin represented the official party viewpoint and that, therefore, whatever he said must be accepted as the last word of wisdom. All they needed was an explanation of Bukharin's meaning and language.

As we went on, line by line and page by page, I soon discovered that none of the youngsters had the slightest idea of what Marxism was all about, while the two men in workers' clothes seemed to tend very definitely toward anarcho-syndicalism in their views. The women took very little part in the discussion and I was unable to

gauge their opinions. The Red army man, Comrade Anikeev, was very reserved, and while obviously better read than the rest, did not give the impression of a Marxian scholar. To all of them the Bolshevik Revolution meant the destruction of monarchy, aristocracy, bureaucracy, and the officer class; to the Jews it meant equalization of rights and for some a chance for revenge and the venting of their bitter resentment on members of the former privileged classes. They were all rebels against the old order of things, but that was about all there was to their political feelings—at least to those that they were able to articulate. As soon as they attempted to discuss political and social theory they were all individualists, and voiced views which widely diverged from each other as well as from the official Bolshevik dogma.

As noontime approached, we stopped our meeting and prepared for lunch. My own provisions consisted of a large loaf of black bread, a couple of pounds of bacon, and a few cucumbers. My traveling companions were very much better provided for. They had roast chickens, hams, white bread, butter, sausages, and candy to sweeten their tea.

Anikeev, the Komissar, beckoned to me and offered two small meat pies and a ham sandwich, which I accepted without any qualms. He was a quiet, slow-spoken man of orderly habits. Obviously he had a great reserve of will power under his smooth, mild manner, and was accustomed to handling men and exercising authority. He struck me as possessing the essential qualities of a good executive.

Without saying anything definite, Anikeev conveyed that he was interested in me and my knowledge of the theory of Marxism. He spoke of other matters too and acknowledged himself an ardent dog lover and a devotee of bird shooting. As in the past I had also been fond of shooting, we found a common ground in the field of sport, and had a very pleasant meal discussing the vagaries of woodcock, snipe, and black game. The Komissar preferred snipe shooting and told me in detail about his bird guns, his pair of pointers, and the swamps near his native village in Central Russia.

Soon after we finished our meal the train stopped at a station and we all went out to stretch our legs and look around. There was not much to see, only a few peasant women selling bread and dill cucumbers, and several hopeful peasants trying to get aboard the overcrowded cars and looking with envy at the guarded staff car, which was forbidden to them. They were obviously still the lower classes, and while there had been a change in the upper or ruling class, that change did not make them feel that they were as good as anyone else

in the Republic. Instead of a million noblemen, about the same number of Bolsheviks and members of the new bureaucracy were lording it over them.

As the train was pulling out of the station the chekists intoned the "International" and we all stood bareheaded at the windows, joining in the stirring chorus:

"Those that were nothing will be everything."

While walking along the station platform I fell to talking to Sonia, the Jewish girl. She told me that she was a nurse and had served during the entire Civil War in the Red army hospitals, and that during the World War she worked on board the floating convalescent camp which for a while was stationed at Petrograd in 1917. Sonia told me that she had studied at the Bestuzhevskii College for Women at Petrograd and had done some nursing in the summers during her vacations from college.

In the winter of 1917 I had met a student of the same college, who also nursed patients on board that barge—Marusia Vikrukhina, from the town of Okhansk on the Kama River. We had seen several plays together and in the summer of 1917, while I was editing the *Naval Review*, I used to call on her quite often on the barge. We used to go on long walks in the Summer Garden or even on the Islands—the favorite promenade of Petrograd—and under the stately trees and amidst the ugly, pockmarked statuary had discussed everything under the sun, from politics to the poetry of Akhmatova and Block.

Marusia was an ardent monarchist and despised the Revolution and all it stood for. She came from a poor middle-class family in a drab provincial town, and to her the glamour, the great pageant of empire, was a matter of sentimental attachment. She hated the ugliness of the gray-coated throngs that took possession of Petrograd streets after the March days, covering the sidewalks with the husks of sunflower seeds. She made fun of the revolutionary tribunes, of Kerenskii, of Avksentiev, of Tseretelli, and heaped scornful abuse on Lenin, on the leaders of the Bolsheviks, *et al.* Marusia was ready to join in any desperate attempt to liberate the Imperial Family still at Tsarskoie Selo and to convey them abroad.

All these memories came back in a rush and I asked Sonia whether by any chance she knew Marusia.

"Of course I knew her. Such a romantic dreamer! You know she was madly in love with an Austrian prisoner she had nursed the year before. And these monarchist ravings of hers!"

Sonia was unable to tell me what had happened to Marusia since

1918, as she herself had gone to the front as a Red army nurse and had wandered ever since from one front to another, all over the face of Russia.

Our common friendship with Marusia made Sonia quite frank with me and she told me quite a bit about her life since the beginning of the Civil War. She was definitely committed to the Red cause and was convinced that the Whites would kill her, should they capture her. At the same time she could not reconcile herself to the endless bloodshed, to the executions, to the brutalization of personal relations. She tried to be a "good fellow" in the sense of those ruthless days, and to pal with the ignorant, cruel youngsters in the car; but it was easy to see that she was not happy and longed for a more orderly life, for tolerably decent human relations, for less crudity.

The study of Bukharin's book was not resumed until the next morning. When the meeting was reopened by my reading another page from *The ABC of Communism* the discussion became even more lively than the day before. Some of Bukharin's theses were not only entirely unknown to my listeners but obviously clashed with some of their firm convictions. Gradually I fell into the rôle not only of an interpreter but of a defender of Bukharin's views against members of my audience, pointing out their heresies against the orthodox communist dogma. Anikeev did not take any part in the discussions, but later in the day as we were walking up and down on the platform of a station he remarked: "Isn't it strange that we are apparently fighting for theories that we do not quite understand? We all know what we are fighting *against*, but when it comes to outlining what our own viewpoint is, apparently the matter is by no means as simple as some of us thought. You are not a member of the Party yourself, are you?"

When I answered in the negative, Anikeev said: "As far as I'm concerned, I joined the Bolshevik Party after the beginning of the Civil War. During the World War I served as a temporary second lieutenant. I always hated the rotten old régime that lost us the Japanese War and was losing the World War. And this Rasputin business was too filthy for words. I'm glad, however, that the Civil War is almost over and that the country will be able to turn to peaceful reconstruction of its economical and social life, instead of squandering its forces in this internecine strife."

Our train, which we called "express" more in sorrow than in anger, took its time to cross the vast plains of Siberia. All in all, we were sixteen days traveling between Krasnoiarsk and Moscow. Thus we

had ample time to go through the entire Bukharin book. My reputation as an expert on Marxism was thoroughly established by the time we crossed the Urals, and the young chekists regarded me as a sort of amateur professor of socialism from whom they could get an answer about any vexing theoretical question. There was also a certain suspicion among them that after all I might be an important Party man masquerading as a non-party traveler.

When we crossed into European Russia I noticed that another staff car had been attached to our train. At one of the stations I went to investigate the occupants, and ran into a well-dressed, dapper military man wearing a Russian uniform but obviously a foreigner. I passed the time of day with him and observed that he spoke with a strong German accent. I asked him in German if he was a German officer, to which he replied in the affirmative.

The next day he came up to me and, after walking along the platform for some time, asked where I was going and what my plans were. I told him as much as I thought prudent to say, and in my turn asked what he was doing here in Russia.

To my great surprise my new acquaintance turned out to be a German General Staff officer occupying an important position on the staff of the famous Moslem Corps organized at that time in Turkestan, for the invasion of India. He told me that the officers were mostly Turks and Tatars with a sprinkling of Moslem Bosnians and Afghans, and that the staff positions were largely filled by German and Austrian General Staff officers. He also explained to me that the corps was so organized that in case of an attack on India it could be promptly expanded into an army, each enlisted man (all Moslems) becoming a non-commissioned officer and each division expanding into an army corps with the help of Indian Moslems who were expected to flock to its banners.

The whole thing seemed quite fantastic to me. I was very doubtful that the Moslems of the Radj would welcome a Red invasion led by German and Austrian *Generalstaebler*.

The German officer complimented me on the quality of my German and asked whether I came from a Baltic Province family. When I answered in the negative he continued:

"It's none of my business to pry into who you really are, and what your plans consist of. I must tell you, however, that from the moment I saw you I felt that you were a former Imperial Russian officer of the regular service. In my opinion it is very dangerous for people like

you to wander around Soviet Russia. Someone might recognize you and then there'd be the devil to pay. By the way, do you speak English?"

This turn of the conversation amazed me, but as I thought that the German had no reason to be inimical to me and was obviously a gentleman, I answered in the affirmative. He spoke then in fair English to me, obviously in order to ascertain how well I spoke the language.

As the train was about to leave, our conversation was interrupted, but the next morning the German came to our car and asked me to have breakfast in his compartment. He was traveling very comfortably, had two orderlies to look after him and an ample supply of good food and a well-stocked cellar.

We were eating an excellently cooked plate of ham and eggs, such as I had not tasted for a year, when my host startled me with an unexpected question: "You are obviously an officer and a gentleman. Your knowledge of German and English is exceptionally good. Why don't you join me and my friends of the Moslem Corps? Here your life is full of hazards, you never know what you are up against. Should you become one of us, all your troubles would be over. We shall pass you for a German officer born in Russia, supply you with all the necessary documents and give you a berth on the operating division of our staff. We need men like you. Besides, what can be more tempting to a Russian military man than the prospect of a march on India, the conquest of that most valuable pearl in the British crown? Just think of it—to tear India away from England, to free its countless millions from the yoke of the British shopkeepers! Isn't it a dream worth living?"

Noticing my reluctance to share his enthusiasm, the German continued: "It doesn't make any difference that this will be done under Red auspices. The important thing is to break up the British Empire. An attack on India will wound the British to the quick. Russia will not always remain Red, and some day a real regenerated Russia will be grateful to those who helped to add India to Russian possessions."

It was on that day that I realized I was not cut out to be a military adventurer. All these tempting prospects of interesting work on the staff of the Moslem Corps, a chance of completely shedding my identity and grasping the chance of leaving Russia with a foreign passport failed to make an impression on me. I thought of my service with the British forces, of my friends in England, and remembered that I had eaten the King's salt; and the whole proposal seemed to me

a preposterous joke unacceptable even as a means to an end—escape from Russia. So I thanked the German very politely and remarked that first of all I wanted to see my parents, from whom I had been separated for several years, and then to try to find some peaceful occupation in civil life, preferably in the field of transportation, which had always attracted me. We parted good friends at the next station. Later on I was invited again to the German car for meals and drinks and we discussed the Versailles Treaty, the German Republic, and the future of Russia.

We learned on our way that the Soviet Ukraine had been invaded by Poles, and we saw signs of anti-Polish propaganda even in the remote hamlets along the Trans-Siberian. Some of that propaganda was very clever, although hardly consistent with Marxian theories. Anyhow, it was well calculated to arouse the feelings of the peasants against the invaders. I remember a poster depicting the famous Kiev Cathedral with a flamboyant inscription proclaiming that the Poles had desecrated the ancient sanctuaries of the Mother of Russian cities!

The effects of the propaganda were noticeable. At some of the stations I observed groups of peasants seeing off their sons who had volunteered to fight the Poles. The old folks were blessing with ikons these Red army volunteers, and the whole mood of these farewell parties was clearly nationalistic, with the flavor of a people's war against the ancient and traditional enemies of Russia.

Anikeev, witnessing one of these scenes, exclaimed:

"It looks as though there was little chance of my shooting snipe this year. More likely be shooting Poles. Why don't you come with me, and have a crack at the Polish *pany*?"

By the time our journey was nearing its end I had heard the autobiographies of practically all of my companions, with the exception of Anikeev. I had to listen to the bragging of the young chekists as to how many people they had personally executed in the cellars of the Cheka, and to their endless tales illustrating what they called "Bolshevik temper," which in practice amounted to utter disrespect for human life. As time wore on I found it more and more difficult to listen to these glorifications of ruthlessness and tried to talk instead to Anikeev, whom I came to like a great deal, and to the two workers, who turned out to be minor employees of the Krasnoiarsk Cheka.

When our train entered Moscow and we were parting company, Anikeev said, "If you don't want to go with me to fight the Poles, do come and shoot snipe next autumn!"

The two workers thanked me very warmly for my reading to them and one of them proposed: "We'd like to do a good turn for you. Come with us to the Lubianka. We'll arrange for quarters for you there. It will come in handy while you're looking for a room in town."

Here again I failed to live up to type, and refused the tempting offer to spend a night at the Lubianka headquarters of the dread Cheka, not as a prisoner but as a guest. Thanking my new friends for their offer of hospitality, I said that I had some friends in Moscow and did not anticipate any trouble in finding shelter.

We shook hands all round in Russian fashion. I said good-bye to Sonia, asking her to write me care of the Moscow Central Post Office should she learn anything about Marusia. Then we all dispersed and I never saw any of them again.

As I walked down the narrow Moscow streets the refrain of the "International" was still ringing in my ears and getting mixed up, somehow, with what the former captain in the Naval Regiment—the one who deserted at Krasnoiarsk—told me when I found him after leaving the concentration camp: "I teach at the Party School now. My pupils are simple, ignorant folk—peasants who fought as partisans, or workers who left their tools to enlist in the Red army—but there is one thing of which they are certain: that the kingdom of socialism has arrived and is here to stay!"

HOME PORT

A BEAUTIFUL summer morning. The broad Neva, steel-blue, calm, and free of all river traffic. A cloudless, Prussian-blue sky, paled by the warm glow of the huge, shimmering dome of St. Isaac's. Before me lay St. Petersburg, much the same as in the days of its imperial glory—or so it seemed, as I walked from the Palace Bridge to the Street of the Galleys past the dignified ochre and white building of the Admiralty.

It was my first visit to St. Petersburg since the fateful days of 1917. Less than two years had elapsed—but how long these years, if measured by the march of events rather than by the clock in the Admiralty's steeped tower! The ebb and flow of vast mobs with red flags, placards, posters, revolutionary banners. The rattling of machine guns at the siege of the Winter Palace in the November days. The booming of the deep-throated guns of the *Aurora*, saluting the tomb of Russian freedom as Kerenskii fled from Petrograd. The still-born attempt of Iudenich White Guards to wrest the Imperial City from Lenin. The dull everyday record of hunger, fear, Red terror, and violent death. Yet it was the same great city I had loved. The quay was empty, there were no steamers on the river, but the old magnificent buildings were still there. The Bronze Horseman—the Russian Gran' Cavallo—still bestrode his fiery steed. The school where most of my childhood was spent blinked at me, its old windowpanes gay with sunshine.

The Moscow train had brought me in that morning and I was still tense with the pathos of the reunion with my parents at the small apartment in an obscure part of the city which had been their home since the Revolution. Funeral services had been said for the welfare of my soul at the parish church eight months before, as the authorities had told my father that I had died in a rear-guard action of the Kolchak Naval Regiment on the Chuna River in Central Siberia. My mother fainted as she beheld me standing in the doorway. I was not

her favorite son, but favorite or not, a son is a son, though he may spend his days far from the family hearth. She was thin and haggard, poor soul. These two years had taken a heavy toll. It was good to be home again, to feel that one belonged, that here was a sheltered corner. The morning was spent in answering endless questions—what I had been doing—how many times I had been wounded—had I been miserable in prison—how I had managed to escape with my life from the clutches of the cruel Cheka—and so on.

After lunch I went off to register at the City Commandant's office. Without his stamp and signature, the house committee would not let me stay even for a day. As I walked along the trim granite embankment of the river, I realized how shabby and unkempt I was. My wide seaman's trousers, unpressed, were hanging in fringes over my unblackened boots, patched and laced with a piece of string; a black pea-jacket, threadbare, shiny and out-at-elbow, and an old naval cap, minus badge, completed my disreputable outfit. My hair had not been cut for months. I must have looked rather like a scarecrow. While I was riding in the *teplushki* of the slow Siberian trains and making my way through dilapidated and dirty cities in Eastern Russia, I had not felt out of the picture. I was merely one shabby pauper among thousands. Here, on the Admiralty Quay, it was different. The stately white columns of Zakharov's great masterpiece, the cool, well-groomed river, the dome of Montferrand's lofty cathedral—all these were in startling contrast with my rags. I felt acutely conscious of my degradation, and of the filth and stench of two years of Civil War. My very documents were spurious.

A passing flash of humor came to my rescue, as I wondered what Grand Duke Cyril would think of a naval officer walking past the Admiralty in such makeshift mufti—rather poor taste on the part of any officer of his regiment! "Strike the beggar off the regimental rolls! No gentleman would think of appearing in such dirty rags in broad daylight, even on a bet."

My introspective searchings were rather suddenly interrupted as I barely avoided running into a well-dressed young woman, who greeted me with delight: "Well, Dimitrii, of all people! I heard yesterday that you had turned up in Moscow, but I certainly didn't expect to meet you on Admiralty Quay. Where are you off to, so deep in thought?"

It was Din-Din, the wife of one of my dearest friends, gay, coquettish, irrepressible, with artistic tendencies expressed in endless mediocre canvases—and quite charming. I shook hands warmly with her,

tremulously suppressing my distress at my own appearance, and told her that I was going to the Commandant's office to have my papers registered.

"Be careful, Dimitrii! I hear the place is simply swarming with blue-jackets. You might meet some of your old friends!"

I assured her that I was always careful, particularly when calling on Soviet officials, and that the visit to the Commandant's was not a matter of choice but of necessity.

"Come and have tea with me after your ordeal," said she. "You must tell me all about your Odyssey. I'm dying to hear it."

Off she went, casual, flippant, friendly as ever, the wide skirt of her blue serge tailor-made swinging jauntily as she walked. Din-Din fitted in quite well with the Quay. She was not shabby, not even shabby-genteel. She was well dressed, spruce, almost smart, very much as she had looked in 1917 when I had gone to see her in the small garden near her house at Helsingfors. The years had not succeeded in dampening her spirit. She had kept her little person out of the whirlpool of the Revolution.

The Commandant's office was in the barracks of the Naval Guards. As I went up the familiar staircase leading to the Regimental Mess, the evidence of a great change impinged more and more acutely upon my mind. Gone was the stately *Suisse* with his chevroned livery. The stone stairs were carpetless. The great pier glass on the landing was smashed. The hitherto immaculate rooms were now encumbered with litter of all kinds. A nondescript queue of people in badly worn odds and ends of naval uniforms were patiently awaiting their turn to present their papers. The registering official was installed in the room previously occupied by the second in command of the Naval Guards, and the waiting line began at the former adjutant's room. Glancing quickly along the row, I made certain that none of them were former naval officers whom I had known, which reduced the chances of my being recognized and drawn into embarrassing conversation. As I drew a breath of relief, I was startled by a stentorian "Good health to you, sir."

This from a heavy-set man in a blue naval flannel shirt, pinned together at the throat with a huge silver pin. His ham-like palm was outstretched. I recognized the stroke of my fourteen-oared cutter of the *Rossia*—the diver Matveenko. It was a somewhat embarrassing moment. I shook hands with Matveenko, trying my best to appear as casual as possible, and to derive comfort from the thought that since he was ahead of me in the line he would not see my papers and there-

fore would not express surprise that the name on the documents did not agree with that which he knew to be my own.

My old shipmate was obviously glad to see me. He immediately proceeded, in peasant fashion, to discuss "the good old times," our cruises in the *Rossia* to the West Indies and the Mediterranean.

"And where is Baron George now? Such a pleasant gentleman! And did you hear from Baron Wladislas? There's a grand one—never saw a better tread the planks of the *Rossia's* deck!"

These were awkward questions to answer in a Soviet commandant's office. George had been an émigré since 1917. Wladislas made a sensational escape in his ship's longboat, in the teeth of a roaring winter gale, fought against the Soviets with the Estonian naval forces and wound up by joining Iudenich. Avoiding any direct answer to Matveenko's embarrassing questions, I blandly told him I was fed up with the navy, had been working in the transportation field since 1917, and had forever given up my naval career.

"Well, sir, you're right there. There's mighty little left of the old navy now. The ships are as dirty as pigsties. These youngsters that are playing at being officers in the Workers' and Peasants' Navy are not worth their salt."

To my dismay, our conversation was attracting a great deal of attention. Matveenko's insistence in addressing me by the Russian equivalent of "sir" was making quite a stir, since such forms of address had quite gone out of fashion with the advent of the Soviets. The old salt's huge fists, however, were an obviously sound argument against any open objection to such outmoded salutations. While quite a few leered in derision at him, none dared to challenge him directly as a survival of the old régime, "a lackey of Tsarism," to quote the elegant parlance of the day.

We were gradually moving up the line, and as Matveenko's turn to enter the Komissar's sanctum approached, he took leave of me with the old salutation of the Imperial navy: "Stay in happiness, sir!" and added as an afterthought, "It was good to see you and to talk about old times. I took my discharge from the navy yesterday and I'm going to settle on land. The best of luck to you, sir."

While he was presenting his papers to the Komissar, I had my first chance to look over the Soviet official behind the desk. He was a youngish man, good looking, clean, dressed in the blue flannel shirt of the Naval Guards Regiment, with a large enamel red star pinned to it. His sailor cap had Naval Guard black and orange colors on its ribbon. Apparently a member of the Communist Party, judging by the red

star. His face did not seem familiar and I did not think I had ever met him before. Probably one of the *Variag* or *Oleg* men, whom I did not know at all, I thought. But my usually excellent memory for faces played me false this time. As I presented my papers, the Komissar gave me a long searching look, then rose, brought his heels together as on parade and greeted me in the old naval formula: "Good health to you, Dimitrii Nikolaevich," and added less formally, "I was your pupil in the Executive Petty Officers' Training School in the *Rossia* in 1912. My name is Egorov."

There was nothing for it but to shake hands with the Komissar and express my pleasure at meeting an old shipmate and pupil after all these years. Meanwhile, my brain was racing like a high-pressure turbine in an effort to see my way out of this new complication. I could not for the life of me remember on what sort of terms I had been with Egorov—whether I had had occasion to discipline him, whether I should put him down as a friend or an enemy. My memory was a complete blank. Cold shivers ran down my spine, and my feet were as jelly. But it was not the moment to show hesitation. I could not very well turn away from the desk without presenting my documents for registration. The crowd pressing on from behind made it impossible to attempt any explanation to Egorov.

So I simply handed my papers to the Komissar.

Between that moment and the time he handed them back to me I died a thousand deaths. It was worse than any bayonet charge.

Egorov looked over my papers, smiled a thin, wintry smile, stamped them with the Commandant's seal, entered all particulars in the Registry, and signed and returned the documents to me. All this without a word of comment, without a word of surprise at the name recurring frequently on the papers. His manner was quite matter-of-fact, as though the transaction was entirely commonplace and humdrum.

As he handed the papers back to me, he again rose and stood at attention, stiff as a ramrod.

"Stay happy, Daniil Fedorovich," said he, using the name he wrote in the register. We shook hands and parted without further words.

As I walked away from the Komissar's desk, I felt like a man in a trance. My feet carried me in the right direction, but all control over my senses was gone from me. The gamut of emotions, surprise, fear—deathly fear that makes a man physically sick—and sudden relief, following in such quick succession, had left me limp and dazed.

But there was still another meeting in store before fate permitted

me to leave the Naval Guards barracks. As I was walking through the anteroom of the Mess, a red-bearded giant in a Guards' greatcoat seized my hand and greeted me with delight. He was another pupil of mine at the Training School, the gay, easy-going Estonian Engelman. We had been good friends in the days of service in the Imperial navy, and the sight of his honest, homely face, framed in bushy, fiery-red side whiskers, did me good.

Engelman told me about his troubles since the Revolution. He had been in prison during the Soviet-Estonian War and had been released only a few weeks before.

"I'm off home to my farm in Estonia, sir. Russia is not a good place to live in."

I inquired about the wound he had received in 1916 in an action against the Germans in Poland.

"Wound? That's nothing, sir. I've forgotten about that long ago. It's this Cheka that worries me. I'll not be a real man again till I'm on the other side of the Soviet border."

As I shared his feelings in this respect, I could only wish him a safe journey home, and on that we parted.

About half an hour later I was sitting in Din-Din's tiny living room before a cup of tea and a few slices of black bread.

"It's lucky for you, Dimitrii, that your men feel about you as they do. Can you imagine P. or V. in your shoes? They would have been torn to pieces."

I tried to convince her that the sailors of the old navy had lost most of their ferocity by this time and had no appetite for their officers' blood; that the peasant element among them felt rather unhappy about the Soviet experiments at class warfare in the villages, which perhaps accounted for the enthusiasm with which they referred to "the good old days."

But Din-Din remained unconvinced.

"We've been here all the time, while you were roaming all over the world. We know better. They're dangerous fellows, these sailors of yours."

On my way to my parents' home, I walked along the wide avenues of the Vassilievskii Ostrov in the eery twilight of a northern summer evening. Passing the long, rambling buildings of the Cadet School, and the German-looking Lutheran Church, I reached the uncouth Touchkov Bridge. As the massive ochre walls of Duke Biron's palace loomed on the low-lying island against the dark shrubbery of the nursery, I felt again the old spell, the fascination of the great city built

by Tsar Peter, who made Bolshevism possible by tearing the educated classes of Russia from their traditional moorings. I forgot what I was, forgot the years of civil war, the horrors of guerilla warfare in Siberia, the icy wind-swept plains of Russian Asia, the endless *taiga* forests of Angara.

And with jaunty step I walked, unmindful of the torn shoes and the tattered coat—not a fugitive from Soviet justice, but just a seaman back in his home port.

SNOWSTORM IN MOSCOW

IN THE winter of 1920-1921 I was living in a small, ochre-tinted stucco pavilion snugly tucked away in the courtyard of a sumptuous town house owned by a nobleman of ancient lineage and—in days gone by—of ample fortune. Its long, dim, unwashed windows faced one of the many narrow and tortuous lanes of that part of Moscow known as Arbat. The pride of our modest dwelling was the glass-enclosed veranda which overlooked a courtyard planted with lime trees.

In summer all the inhabitants of the pavilion drank tea on the veranda or in a corner of the courtyard shaded by some straggling acacias. In the winter the kitchen served as a community club.

Petrusia, the old cook who had worked for the masters of the house in pre-revolutionary days, prepared food for all of us, in return for a modest fee. The female population, however, was constantly fussing around the stove, getting in Petrusia's way and entreating her to get their particular dinner ready as soon as possible.

Pavlinych, the former scullery boy, a hunchback and a dwarf, occupied the position of president of the house committee, and at the same time acted as superintendent of the building. He eked out a living by cobbling in his spare moments. He lived in a small closet near the kitchen and helped Petrusia in her work. His duties consisted in keeping the oven stocked with firewood, splitting logs, and tending the great communal samovar. In his capacity of president of the house committee Kuzmich kept in touch with the militia, as the city police were now called under the Soviets. He carried our labor books to district headquarters for registration, and considered himself invested with a certain amount of authority over the inhabitants of the pavilion. Of this he was not a little proud.

The house was very well populated. There was a family living in every room. Only Schwartzberg, the Komissar, had two rooms, and the numerous clan of Khreptovs enjoyed a larger apartment.

The Moscow Cheka kept a watchful eye on the house. Nearly all of its inhabitants were "former people" and were on that account suspected of counter-revolutionary tendencies and considered not averse to "speculation" and neglect of their civic duties to an extent verging on sabotage. The only exception in that flock of black sheep was Schwartzberg, a Communist and a Komissar on the Kazan Railroad. To us, at least, he seemed a rising star in the Soviet firmament. But even Schwartzberg was not without sin in the eyes of the Communist authorities. His wife was a scion of the old nobility and a graduate of the Smolnyi College for young noblewomen, and it was even rumored that her father had been a general in the old Imperial army.

Arrests were not uncommon among the dwellers in the pavilion. We all got quite hardened to it. Such things became almost a matter of routine. The wives of those arrested carried parcels of food to prison and waited patiently in queues to obtain an interview with various Soviet bigwigs who were thought to have influence on the further fate of the prisoners. In those days it was still possible for a wife of a political prisoner to obtain such audiences. After a month, perhaps two, our imprisoned neighbors returned and continued, apparently quite unconcerned, to attend to their duties at the various departments where they were working. One could hardly believe that they had just been released from prison.

There was no political discussion in the house. The walls, even, were not to be trusted. Some continued to dream about deliverers, native or foreign. Others contemplated migrating abroad, without taking any steps to achieve it. Meanwhile most of us were working hard at our tasks at the government offices.

The winter of 1920-1921 was prolific in snowstorms, and Moscow was completely snowed under. Our lane became a deep snowdrift with narrow paths trodden here and there.

The authorities issued instructions. Citizens of Moscow were told to shovel the snow off the streets without delay. The presidents of the respective house committees were declared responsible for the execution of the order, while the general supervision and the enforcement of the decree were entrusted to a special committee of three, of which Comrade Saveliev was appointed chairman.

The citizenry read the decree posted on the hoardings all over the city. But nothing further happened. There were so many decrees on the hoardings! If one were to take them all seriously there would be no happiness or freedom left in the city. A few conscientious people

made some desultory passes with wooden spades. Most of the Soviet employees, upon returning in the evening from their offices, did not even attempt to start street-cleaning. There would be plenty of time for that on Sunday, they thought. Snow was not like fire. It would lie quietly in the streets till Sunday and be none the worse.

This time the passive attitude of the Moscow citizenry proved to be their undoing. Comrade Saveliev, the newly appointed snow dictator, had come to the Moscow streets straight from the Red army. A dour man, full of enterprise and spunk, and a typical professional soldier, although before the Revolution he had traveled in haberdashery, Comrade Saveliev took his duties very seriously. The militia districts were instructed to take an active interest in the supervision of work, and the presidents of the house committees were warned not to fail in carrying out their duties. Saveliev decreed that all people negligent in the shoveling of snow were to be arrested and confined in suitable places of detention.

The militiamen ran about, as thick as cockroaches in a communal kitchen, and the presidents of the house committees sat up and took notice.

Comrade Saveliev decided to make a personal tour of inspection to see how the decree was being carried out in the city.

The underfed trotter was showing his best paces, sending hard clumps of snow flying from beneath its hoofs. The red-bearded driver kept shouting, as in the old days, "*Padih, padih!*" The light sleigh bounded rapidly over the snowdrifts.

Comrade Saveliev sat stiffly erect, his nose buried in his astrakhan collar. The cold fresh air probably conjured up visions of past winters spent on the Kama and in Siberia, when he was following Bluecher; perhaps he thought of that streak of bad luck when he was captured by the Whites, and had saved his life by escaping from the *izba* where he was shut up.

The sleigh plunged into a deep rut just as it rounded the corner of our lane, and Saveliev came back to earth.

"Damn these bourgeois, they haven't even begun to shovel their snow! It's time to show them what revolution and revolutionary discipline means!"

If these were not his exact thoughts, our experience next morning proved that they were running along these lines.

"Daniil Nikolaevich! Open the door! A militiaman wants to see you on urgent business!" called out Pavlinych, the dwarf, in his piping voice.

I was shaving at the moment and had to wash off lather before I opened the door.

Red bristling moustachios, pale watery eyes, a military cloth cap, a revolver holster—the militia comrade was waiting for me right at the door. The dwarf hid himself behind the bulky figure of the guardian of Soviet law.

“Are you Citizen White?”

“I am.”

“Did you refuse to participate personally in the snow-clearing campaign?”

“I did not, but I actually had no time. I have responsible government work to perform. My whole day is occupied by my duties at the office, while practically every evening I have committee meetings to attend. I hope to be able to shovel snow on Sunday.”

“Please come with me to the militia headquarters.”

Our house was like a beehive in alarm. With the exception of my immediate neighbor, a military technician, who had done some snow-shoveling the day before, all male inhabitants of the house were ordered to report at the militia bureau.

Our farewells were not without their humorous side. The gay, easy-going Din-Din twittered, as her husband was adjusting his knapsack, “Please, Sandik, don’t catch cold. And keep your feet dry. I’ll wreak terrible vengeance on that good-for-nothing dwarf. I’ll teach him to inform the militia against us in future. Like a fool, I was always nice to him. I even recited Block’s poem for him, about the cute little gnome. He’s a skunk, that’s what he is!”

Serge Khreptov, a naval officer holding an important position at the Naval Komissariat was boiling over with indignation:

“To hell with this militia! I have an appointment to see the Commander-in-Chief at eleven on several important matters that can’t be put off. Now this damned Snow Committee has to start fooling, just to complicate things. Sandik, do call the komissariat on the phone and tell them to get in touch immediately with the snow dictators. There is no sense in this tomfoolery. As the proverb goes: teach a fool to pray and he’ll crack his head doing penance!”

The tall, thin Dalevskii, very much of a dandy, had his bag already buckled up: “You never can tell what may happen. I always keep my prison baggage ready. Who knows how long the detention may last?”

He had already been in prison three times since the advent of the Soviets, and spoke therefore with knowledge born of hard experience.

The militiaman tried to arrest Schwartzberg, the Komissar. Nothing came of it, however.

"I shall oppose arrest by armed force," Schwartzberg shouted, jumped into his car and was gone, leaving the bewildered policeman gaping.

Moscow was accustomed to seeing convoys of prisoners. At least it was that winter. Our group, escorted by militiamen, did not attract the slightest attention.

We were feeling quite merry—we were on our way to a mere militia station—not to the Cheka. At worst only a few days of arrest were in store for us, nothing more serious, for certain. As we were all rather chummy, that did not frighten us at all. The wives knew their jobs to perfection—this was not the year 'seventeen when people did not know what to do when their relatives were arrested.

It was freezing. The snow was crisp. The smoke from the chimney stacks of the city rose in long plumes to the pale clear sky. Somewhere behind the Moscow River church bells were pealing their call to matins.

The escort were not a bad lot. They did not hurry us and were not brusque or rude.

Khreptov was philosophizing: "I quite agree that snow ought to be cleared away from the streets. No question about it. But what I don't understand is, why I should be the one to do it? It is not nineteen seventeen now. They had plenty of time to build up some municipal machinery and organize a street-cleaning department, at least in the capital. Why should they call on private citizens to act as street sweepers? In the first place I don't feel like a private citizen at all; in the second place I have other work to do. One is busy all day long at the komissariat, and part of the night too, for that matter. Committee meetings, papers to be prepared and read. Even supposing I am wrong, and it was impossible to develop municipal street-cleaning, I still maintain the matter should be worked out along the lines of private initiative and collective endeavor of the inhabitants of a given street. Instead of that, the age-old formula: Get him by the scruff of the neck and hold fast!"

Dalevskii was listening rather moodily to this long diatribe. Obviously he did not approve of such unnecessary verbiage.

"Snow clearing is a matter for house superintendents; what use are they, if they can't even keep the streets clean? They think because they're called 'Red Superintendents' they can just loaf."

I was in rather a happy frame of mind. It reminded me of the long

marches on Siberian roads during the Civil War. It was a lark to amble along at a leisurely pace instead of sitting in a stuffy room at the offices of the komissariat.

My pleasant thoughts came to an end, however, as we entered the courtyard of the huge brick building occupied by the Moscow militia.

"Well, citizens, you'd better wait here for a while. I am going to report to the chief. The matter will be cleared up in no time. He will probably fine you and let you walk back home," said the militiaman who was in charge of our convoy.

We were then herded into the inner recesses of the building and led into a large room used for prisoners under temporary detention. All places on benches along the walls were already occupied and we had to settle down on the stone flags. Dalevskii had the advantage of us, as his tightly packed bag provided him with a fairly comfortable seat.

But gradually we all found a place to sit down and began to take stock of the people we found in the detention room.

They were quite a mixed lot. Mostly small traders, "speculators" in Soviet parlance. There were also some who were apparently arrested for the same cause as our group, so we made inquiries from them how matters stood and whether there was a chance of getting released soon. Our fellow prisoners were rather pessimistic.

"This snow dictator is a perfect beast. I'll show you how to sabotage the street-cleaning campaign!" says he; "Under the Tsars you were ready to liven the streets with your tongues, but since the Soviets came to power you think you can get away with neglecting the pavement altogether!"

This information somewhat damped our spirits. It looked bad. Perhaps a week or more of arrest.

In about half an hour Khreptov's brother burst into the room. A former colonel in the Imperial Foot Guards, he was now a Red brigadier general and a knight of the Order of the Red Banner. He looked like a chekist, dressed in black leather, with a red star on his cap.

"Hello, all of you! What are you so glum about? I'll show them! I am going to see that snow dictator fellow right away. Or someone above him, if necessary. Meanwhile, get your teeth into some of these sandwiches Mother made for you. I am off to see the snow king."

The guardsman's visit cheered us up considerably. The Brigadier General was a bird of good omen. Even the other people in the room became less despondent. If an outsider could get in and out here, then matters were obviously not very serious. So we all started to do honor to the sandwiches.

Our friend was back in a few minutes. He seemed quite pleased with himself.

"Well, what's the news?"

"Everything's all right. They're going to release you right away."

"Tell us more!"

"Well, I went straight to headquarters. The sentry wouldn't let me in at first, said I should file an application for an interview. 'To hell with the application, you dumb-bell,' said I, and made straight for the door. I found a reddish fellow with long hair and eyeglasses. He looked a bit surprised. 'What do you want, comrade?' 'Permit me to introduce myself—Comrade Khreptov, commanding the X Red Rifle Brigade,' and I adjusted the Red Banner bow so that he could see whom he was talking to. Then he became quite friendly: 'Glad to make your acquaintance, Comrade; what can I do for you?' Then I started to tell him what I thought of him and his snow campaign: 'You people here seem to be bogged in paper work and all sorts of unnecessary activities. At the same time you never forget to distribute cards to each other for the special Kremlin ration, for textile goods—and all this, while we're shedding blood to defend the socialistic Fatherland!' Told him also about my wounds, and about the Battle of the Chongar Bridge, how we stormed it. The hairy one kept silent and looked at me in a bewildered way. So I told him some more. 'You were appointed to shovel snow—why don't you do it? Instead of cleaning the streets, as you should, you went ahead and arrested my brother and several other Soviet employees from our house. Do you think there is no other work in the whole Republic but your snow-shoveling? There's a committee meeting at Trotskii's office this morning and you've locked up more than half of the men that had to attend it. The Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the Chief of the Navy, the whole Naval Komissariat are up in the air. You've succeeded in throwing a monkey-wrench into a very important piece of governmental machinery. Just look through that window, there is already a third carful of bluejackets driving into the yard. The whole navy is looking for my brother.'

"The fellow looked, saw the car and got sort of scared. Said: 'Comrade Brigadier, please don't get excited. We are not on the firing line now. I shall look into the matter right away and try to let your brother go, if possible.' And right at that time his phone rang: 'Hallo! who is there? Good-day, Comrade Sklianskii . . . Yes . . . Yes . . . they will be set free at once . . . Yes, oh yes, quite so . . .' Then to

me: "What is your house number?" "Malo Kozlovskii Lane." . . . Come out with your things."

We were led into a roomy hall and lined up like soldiers. Comrade Saveliev appeared almost immediately. He gave us a savage look through his eyeglasses, and his sharp green eyes bored into us like a pair of gimlets.

"You'll be freed, citizens. I give you one month of imprisonment, conditionally. I also impose a fine of fifty thousand rubles each. In future, abide by the decrees, you will not get off so easily again."

A militiaman began to call our names and we were told to file past Comrade Saveliev and pay our fine to a clerk of the militia court.

As my name was called and I sang out: "Present!", Comrade Saveliev stiffened as though on parade, and said in a tense voice, "I think we have met before, Comrade White."

"Sorry, Comrade Saveliev, I do not recall ever having met you."

"I thought I had seen you at Omsk in 1919."

"You are probably confusing me with somebody else. I assure you that we never met before."

"Comrade Komissar, there is a telephone call for you from the Kremlin," reported an orderly.

Saveliev gave me another look and started off for his office.

By that time all of our roster was called and we were on our way out. We passed several enclosures, not unlike cattle pens in a country fair. These enclosures were filled to capacity by respectable-looking people, probably former house owners from the right bank districts of Moscow now acting as presidents of house committees. They were ex-merchants of the old school, with wide bushy whiskers. They were quite envious of our treatment.

"Look how quickly they got out! This is our second week, and we don't know when they'll let us go. Rather a joke to be put in cold storage on account of snow."

As we came out into the courtyard we found a group of sailors. They were obviously glad to see our friends from the Naval Komissariat.

"Get in here, Comrade Khreptov, pile in, comrades!"

They cranked up the engine while the crowd of idlers gaped at the red devil mascot on the radiator.

"Instead of a figurehead," explained the chauffeur to the onlookers, who were none the wiser for the explanation.

"These bluejackets are bad, always up to their tricks," commented

an old *baba*. "Is it proper to put a red devil on a car? I am asking you, my lords, have you got one cross among all of you, you sinners?"

"Why, grandmother, of course we have crosses, we're all Christians! The devil is just for a joke. Let him freeze, the accursed one."

The gates were swung open and the car shot out into the street in high, hooting wildly and scattering the scared pedestrians. In a few minutes we were home.

Pavlinych, the dwarf, opened the door with an air of penitence. He did not expect to see us back so soon. We threatened him: "We'll show you up, you dirty stool-pigeon. We'll teach you to report us to the militia. From now on your life's going to be a nightmare!"

At first the dwarf put up a bold front, even muttering something about the passing of the old régime, but eventually he scuttled away to his closet with his tail between his legs. Later he got a similar dose from Komissar Schwartzberg.

Khreptov invited all and sundry to take a neighborly cup of tea, and we gathered about the large table of the Khreptov family.

The General's wife got some cherry jam out for the occasion, while the daughter, Masha, started frying some sausage and onions on the kerosene stove. The room was soon filled with the odor of freshly cooked highly seasoned food.

The General, Khreptov's father, uncorked a bottle of diluted alcohol to celebrate our liberation.

I toasted our gracious hosts, while the Red Brigadier succeeded three times in getting off the story of his conversation with the Komissar. He even started about the Battle of the Augustovo Forest during the Great War.

"Yes, my friends, there was a special brand of old Smirnov vodka that we used to drink at the Rifle Guards' mess. As soon as you disposed of a glass, another became your unavoidable fate. We had some nice silver cups for the vodka, suitably engraved in old Slavic script: 'Drink and mind your business' and such-like old proverbs."

The General did not agree as to vodka: "Well, no; in the Caucasus at the old Samur Regiment we rather preferred an infusion of black currant leaves, or plain vodka and bitters."

He was interrupted by a knock at the door.

"Come in!"

Our neighbor the Komissar strode in. "Glad to see you home, citizens. I had in mind to call the militia up about you in a neighborly way."

A glass of vodka was offered to the Komissar, and the conversation shifted around a bit.

The Red Brigadier, feeling himself a full-fledged citizen of the Soviet Republic, toasted Schwartzberg and started to talk about Siberia and the Komissar's service with Larin's Division. The General kept silent and only emitted vague grunts of approval when a vanguard action, a flanking maneuver, or a raid was mentioned.

I was thinking of Comrade Saveliev. It was obviously time to prepare for a dash across the border. If not today, then tomorrow, someone might recognize in me the former head of Admiral Kolchak's Foreign Department of the Navy.

There was still another knock at the door. The dwarf came in to make his peace with us.

"My lords—I mean citizens—do not be angry with me. It was through no fault of mine that you were arrested. I am always held responsible, and sometimes it's impossible to look after everything. Now, as far as this snow business is concerned, in future I'll clear the street myself on week-days."

We gave him absolution in a tumblerful of alcohol.

SLIPPING THE MOORINGS

1921

THE Neva was steel-gray on that cool early autumn morning of 1921 as I walked along the Vassilievskii Ostrov embankment towards the old Nicholas Bridge, with its green cast-iron sea horses projecting over the heavy span thrown across the mighty river in the stern days of the Emperor whose name it bore.

This was to be my last day in St. Petersburg—already Petrograd, but not yet Leningrad—perhaps, I was thinking, my last day in Russia.

As a boy I had loved to wander for hours along this same embankment, sniffing the spicy smell of coconuts brought in by a British tramp, the salty sharpness of herrings unloaded by a rusty little Norwegian freighter, or the indefinable but exotic aroma emanating from the hold of a German steamer with a cargo from the Far East. For me the embankment epitomized the adventurous life of the sea, strange, far-off countries, the promise of a different life in sunnier, more colorful lands.

Now the river was empty of shipping. Only a weather-beaten old tub was unloading some miscellaneous and uninteresting cargo.

The old slips of the Admiralty, so fascinating in my boyhood, were lying idle. Against their red-brick background stood the exquisite little Church of our Saviour of the Seas, and I recalled that fateful day when the ships went forth from the Neva to be annihilated by the Mikado's fleet at Tsushima, and the doom of the Russian Empire was sealed.

It was a fitting morning to say farewell to the city I loved. Sunshine and a gay breeze would have been out of place.

I had a long walk before me to reach the Finland Railway Station; first through the familiar First Line of the Ostrov, past the Empress Anne Cadet School, then along the Bolshoi Prospekt and finally

through the maze of narrow lanes and streets leading to the station. I had ample time to think of the future that lay before me—provided, of course, there was a future and that I could manage to avoid the Cheka and make my way across the frontier.

A few days earlier I had succeeded in establishing contact with one of the smuggling outfits specializing in taking people across the border into Finland. In those times many such organizations had sprung up to meet the demands of the numerous people desiring to go abroad by extra-legal means, since the usual channels were closed. There were several underground railways running across all the frontiers of Russia, very much as had been the case in America prior to the Civil War.

After establishing contact with one such organization, I made arrangements with them as to the date and train on which I was to leave Petrograd, and paid them a fairly large sum in Finnish marks in advance for their services. I was given the password and the signs by which I was to recognize the guide who would meet me at a certain small railroad station along the Finland line. As a measure of protection, not only for myself but also for my friends, I kept my plans strictly to myself and did not say good-bye to anyone. I know that several of them were very angry with me for keeping my departure secret, interpreting my secrecy as a lack of confidence in them. Such was not the case, for I had full confidence in them. I merely wanted to place them in a position to say truthfully to the Cheka examiner, should they be arrested in connection with my departure, that they knew nothing of my plans. The sad example of General Schreibers' garrulousness, which resulted in about ninety arrests after his flight to Finland, had been a good warning to me.

Reaching the station about one hour ahead of the scheduled hour of the train I was to take to connect with my guide, I presumed I had left ample time to secure a ticket and a seat. I was therefore sadly disappointed when I came upon an endless queue of farmers and milk-women with their empty pails returning from the Petrograd markets. The line was moving so slowly and the ticket clerk took so long over each transaction that it soon became clear to me that I should never reach the window before the departure of the train, and passengers were admitted to the platform only on presentation of a ticket.

Thus the first hitch occurred where it was least expected. It had been very emphatically impressed upon me by my organization that I must take that particular train, otherwise the whole plan for my escape across the border would be upset, and I would have to retrace

my steps and wait at least a week for another appointment with a guide.

In desperation at the thought that my plans might be wrecked by an inefficient ticket-seller, it suddenly occurred to me that I still had in my possession documents identifying me as an executive of a Moscow government bureau connected with transportation. I decided, therefore, to try to obtain a pass from the station authorities. I hunted up the station Komissar and explained that by an oversight I had failed, when in Moscow, to provide myself with a pass from Petrograd to X., where I wanted to visit some relatives, adding that I felt sure he would have no objection to issuing one to a fellow transport-worker on leave from an important post in Moscow.

To my intense relief, the magic of a Moscow document did the trick, and the Komissar issued a round-trip pass without any delay, so that, somewhat ironically, I made my last railway journey in Soviet Russia at the Government's expense!

The short suburban train was filled to capacity. Not only were all the seats occupied, but passengers were standing in the aisles and vestibules of the cars. It was a dense and none too sweet-smelling crowd. I was, however, rather glad that the passengers were so numerous, for the railroad police control would of necessity be more perfunctory and fewer questions were likely to be asked.

When the train had started to jerk its way through the maze of tracks at the depot, accelerating as it reached the open country, I took stock of my immediate neighbors, most of whom, I noticed, had at least a nodding acquaintance with each other. They began to chatter in Finnish and Russian immediately after the train had left the station. In my part of the car (formerly third class, now known as "hard") practically all the passengers were Finnish farmers and their women-folk. There were also two railway men sitting on a bench talking about the new regulations regarding the issue of food rations and the chances of obtaining a pair of new galoshes from their Bureau of Requisitions. One of them saw me showing my pass to the conductor, and asked, "Are you also a railroad man, comrade?"

As I did not want to be involved in a conversation with them, in case they might by any chance be leaving the train at the same station as I, my answer was a curt "No."

The railway Cheka patrol went through, hurriedly examining documents and asking no questions at all. To them this was apparently just a dull routine which they went through semi-mechanically with no expectation of coming upon anything or anyone of importance.

However, I experienced a feeling of genuine relief when it was over, as I had heard that some of these patrols were apt to be inquisitive.

Time crawled very slowly. I even fell to counting the clicking of the wheels on the rail joints, having grown weary of rehearsing in my mind the description of the man who was to meet me, and the signs by which I would recognize him.

"Follow him leisurely some couple of hundred yards' distance from the station until you get to the fields. When he considers it safe for you to speak to him he will stop and wait for you. Then approach and give the password. He will tell you what to do next."

At the station where I alighted there were a few railway Cheka men and I was glad to be in company with a fairly large group of farmers and milkwomen. In spite of this protection of numbers I imagined that their looks were directed toward me as I trailed along with the rest of the group up the hill from the station buildings.

My guide I spotted almost immediately. This cheered me up very considerably. Now, at least, I was certain that I had not missed the point of departure of the underground railroad that was to take me across the border.

As I was ambling along, following the milkwomen clattering uphill with their empty pails, I thought of the effects of the discovery of my disappearance in Moscow, when my political komissars as well as my superiors realized that I had slipped my moorings.

I figured that it would take a long time for my colleagues and their political supervisors to discover that I had left Russia. My absence from the office was duly authorized as sick leave for a two months' period because of the recommendation of a medical board which had reported symptoms of paranoia and suggested rest and change of environment. I had also negotiated a transfer to another department, with the idea that in the chaotic state of Soviet affairs one department would for a long while presume that I was working for the other, and that ultimately neither would raise a hue and cry. And, after all, was there much reason to worry about the disappearance of a paranoiac? I congratulated myself on the excellent results of my study of paranoia symptoms and the general background in psychiatry which I had succeeded in acquiring a few weeks before my appearance before the medical board, which in all good faith passed me as mentally unfit. I thought that this arrangement should provide as good a smoke screen as any to cover my disappearance.

Since I had moved out of the room I occupied in Moscow into a temporary billet a couple of weeks prior to starting for Petrograd,

there was nothing to fear from that quarter, as the house committee knew that I had moved before going on leave. And as long as my plans of escape succeeded, the other occupants of the small house I roomed in were fairly immune from the inquisitiveness of the Cheka. None of my colleagues at the office knew of my plans, with the exception of my friend Korcyn Zukowski, a young Pole, who in his turn was on his way to the Polish border. All they knew was that I had left on a two months' sick leave and was about to be transferred to another department, so they actually did not expect me to return to work in their office. This left my colleagues and immediate superiors free of any suspicion of complicity and, by the same token, any danger of arrest by the Cheka.

On my way from Moscow to the border I had left no traces for the Cheka. During the several nights I spent at Petrograd I had succeeded in finding shelter without having to register with the house committee, spending the nights not with friends, but at neutral places where the Cheka was not likely to think of looking for me.

This theory worked out fairly well in practice until Korcyn, upon reaching a safe sanctuary in Poland, decided to have a little fun, and sent off a mocking postcard to the chief Komissar at the office in which we had both worked. This naturally galvanized him into action and led to the discovery of my disappearance from Russia as well. However, my other precautions worked and, as far as I know, there were no arrests in connection with my escape, and no trouble was caused for anyone who had known me in Moscow.

While I was thinking about these precautionary measures taken before my departure, it began to drizzle and I became somewhat impatient of the slow pace at which our group was moving. The border was so close—only a dozen miles away! I felt I could run the whole distance without stopping!

The road we were following entered a birch grove, and the guide stopped to wait for me. I walked up to him, wished him a loud "Good afternoon," and whispered the password. He acknowledged it in the manner explained to me at Petrograd, and we walked on side by side. The man was a Karelian farmer, dressed in the usual fashion adopted by these people—the trousers tucked into a pair of heavy topboots—and had a short, smelly pipe in his teeth. There was nothing in his appearance to distinguish him in any way from the group of Finnish farmers ahead of us.

The guide told me that from now on we would walk at the side of the road, so as to be less visible to the Frontier Guard patrols, and

that I should throw myself into the underbrush at a certain sign made by him. He gave me a rallying point where I was to try to meet him should we by chance be separated in case of pursuit. He also informed me that I should not be taken across the border that night, but on the next day. This was a keen disappointment to me, as I had hoped to reach Finland by midnight.

We soon left the main road and took a narrow cart track winding among fir trees. The drizzle changed to rain and I was soon thoroughly drenched.

From time to time the guide looked at the large silver watch he carried on a heavy chain in his waistcoat pocket. When we approached a small wooden bridge across a creek he suddenly motioned me to creep under its planks. A few minutes later we heard the clatter of hoofs of two horses overhead. I understood that the Frontier Guard patrol had passed on its round.

We stayed for a while under cover of the bridge until the rain abated somewhat and then went on our way. It was already getting dark when we saw the houses of the guide's village in the distance.

"Stay here, under these alder bushes. You can rest until I come for you with the people who will take you across the border."

This was the first intimation I had that the guide would not go with me all the way across the border and that the last stage of the journey would be effected in the company of other men. However, as it was obviously useless to ask any questions or to argue, I crept under cover of the alders and stretched myself out on the wet ground, propping my head on the small kit bag I carried. Suddenly I felt very tired. The long walk both in Petrograd and from the station, combined with the strain, the hopes, and the excitement, had worn me out and almost immediately I fell asleep.

Apparently I had not lost the habit of waking at the slightest noise which I had acquired during the Siberian marches, for I jumped up at the sound of steps and saw a group of men approaching the bushes where I was hidden. It was raining again and I discovered that I had actually slept in a puddle and was wet through.

The guide called me in a subdued voice and I left the shelter of the bushes and was faced by two tall, spare Finnish youngsters in rough city clothes with long-barreled Mauser automatics in their hands. The guide spoke a few words to them in Finnish which I could not understand. They both shook hands, and one of them produced a large Browning automatic which he handed over to me, together with a spare magazine.

The feel of that automatic in my palm affected my mental state considerably. Suddenly I felt confident, sure of myself and of the ultimate success of the expedition. The pistol had "made a man of me," given me back the feeling of self-reliance I had lost during the days of the Cheka and prison life.

One of the Finns asked me whether I knew how to handle a Browning, which made me laugh out loud, and in that cheerful mood I was introduced to another traveling companion, a former officer of the Iudenich army, which had failed to capture Petrograd in 1919 and was subsequently disbanded. He was acting, so I learned later, as a courier for one of the European Intelligence Services. He was a short, stocky fellow, powerfully built and very quiet and composed. It seemed that to him this border-running business was all in the day's work and he was probably chuckling mentally at my excitement.

The guide took leave and we set off in Indian file, pistols in hand, at a distance of some ten yards from each other. We walked briskly, following a narrow path apparently well known to my companions, since in spite of the darkness they showed no hesitation at the turns and twists it took and at the numerous intersections with other tracks.

After about three hours' walking we reached a small clearing in which stood a rough shelter. We crept into the shelter, and the former Iudenich officer, who spoke Finnish fluently, told me that we would stay there until morning and resume our tramp to the border after sunrise.

The Finns produced a bottle of cheap brandy, a loaf of black bread, and some sausage. As I was both cold and hungry, I helped myself to a couple of drinks and made myself a thick sandwich before turning in.

It was still dark when I woke. My companions were asleep. I left the shelter and did a few exercises to restore my circulation and get rid of the feeling of cold, clammy dampness conveyed by my clothes and shoes. Then I sat down on a tree stump and fell to musing.

In the stillness of that early morning in the forest I went over the various discussions I had had with people to whom I could talk frankly both in Moscow and Petrograd as to the future course of events in Russia. Practically all of them were of the opinion that the New Economic Policy—Lenin's famous NEP—meant a gradual return to capitalism and the supplanting of the dictatorship of the Communist Party by a coalition government with the participation of all Socialist parties. They cited chapter and verse of their conversations with important communists close to the Kremlin circles, and were

hopeful that life in Russia would become easier for the intellectuals and for the remnants of the propertied classes who were able to adapt themselves to the new circumstances.

"Anyone who emigrates now is a fool. Why starve abroad when there is a chance of useful and interesting reconstruction work right here at home? The worst is over. From now on all this military communism business will be wiped out and forgotten, and a real reconstruction of the economic life of the country on sane common-sense lines will begin."

This was practically the unanimous verdict of persons with whom I came in contact. Some went even further:

"There will be a great many concessions given out to foreign capitalists. People like yourself, with the command of several foreign languages, with business experience in America and friends abroad, will have no difficulty in obtaining an important position with any of these companies, since they will be looking for reliable Russians as advisers and collaborators. This means an excellent future for you and ample opportunity to go abroad later, should you decide to do so; but with some real money in your pocket and not as a beggar."

My own experience, in the department I was associated with, enabled me to see that the Government was taking definite steps to correct the impossibly chaotic situation created by the Civil War and military communism. All my discussions with the Komissars also led me to believe that the majority of them felt that the NEP would last for a long time, perhaps for a whole generation.

At the same time, while I had very little to go on beyond a careful reading, unobscured by any wishful thinking, of Lenin's utterances regarding the NEP, I reached the conclusion that the change of policy was merely a tactical one to gain time—a sort of breathing spell to permit that shorn lamb, the Russian peasantry, to grow new wool and to arrange for the city population to get a little food into their empty stomachs and forget the hunger and misery of the first years of the Bolshevik Revolution. The conversations I had with some old-time communists of the idealistic type (idealists in spite of their so-called materialistic *Weltanschauung*) also made me think that the NEP would not live long, so inimical were they all to the new trend of policy.

"To replace real capitalists by speculators of the Black Bourse, industrialists by sweat-shop operators, merchants by carpet-baggers, landlords by *kulaki*—is there any gain in this for the future of socialism

in Russia? A second-rate capitalism is perhaps worse than the real thing in its demoralizing effect on the masses." Such were the thoughts, if not the words.

Apart from the question of the general trend of Soviet policy, I had to consider my own case as different from those of the people with whom I discussed these problems. Most of them had fought on the Red side during the Civil War, or had at least worked in some government bureau during that period. These were perhaps looked upon with a certain suspicion, as former class enemies, old intellectuals, officers, and so on, but their Civil War record was a definite asset, a sheet anchor to the wind in the troubled sea of Soviet life.

My own position was entirely different. Not only did I fight in the ranks of the White armies and of the Interventionists, but I had also held fairly important positions in White Siberia. Furthermore, there was my escape from Russia in 1918. On any one of these counts I could be shot without much formality, should the Moscow or the Petrograd Cheka look carefully into their files and piece together the evidence against me. And this they were likely to do, as soon as they were less pressed with the problems of the suppression of peasant rebellions caused by the policies of military communism.

It was true that I had faithfully performed my duties in the Government department in which I worked, and was probably considered what the Russians call an "indispensable worker." I was popular with the rank and file, stood well with the trade-union, and the Komissars regarded me as a useful cog; I knew myself that I was doing some constructive work in rehabilitating one of the minor phases of Russian economic life. The work interested me immensely; it was what I had always wanted to do and I was happy to labor at it for eleven to twelve hours a day. I was proud of what little I succeeded in rebuilding from the chaos of Civil War days. The Komissars hinted to me several times that I could aspire to the highest position in the department, particularly if I joined the Communist Party.

But now comes the hitch. I had studied Marxism very thoroughly and knew considerably more about the basic writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin than the average communist, probably more than any of our Komissars. But the more I studied the Leninist brand of Marxism the more repugnant that *Weltanschauung* became to me; particularly as I sensed that "democracy within the party" was a mere empty phrase and that the party was ruled by a tight little group of old revolutionaries. I thought, perhaps at that time wrongly, but in the long run rightly, that within the party there was as little room for freedom

of expression or for developing a policy as outside of it. The controversy between Trotskii and Zof regarding the organizational scheme of the various transportation systems of the country showed me clearly that those outside of the exalted group on top were mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, in spite of their meritorious services during the Civil War. As I saw it, to become a member of the Communist Party meant to become a "yes man" and to be proud of it. I had to be a "yes man," outside of the party, but at least I need not pretend to be proud of it.

The idea of being reduced to and accepting willingly the status of the exemplary ant was most repellent to me, and this feeling, perhaps even more than the sense of very real danger of my life, impelled me to abandon the work I loved and make an attempt to escape abroad. I knew enough of the post-war western world not to paint it to myself in too rosy colors. I anticipated several years of manual work in America before a chance of any kind of career in business or science might present itself and enable me to lead a fairly pleasant and useful life. I knew that there was no certainty of my emerging from the mass of poverty-stricken emigrants of the New World and that I might possibly end my days as a pauper, forgotten and friendless in a foreign land. I felt, however, that the chance of being able to think freely, to talk without fear of being hauled in by the Cheka, to read any book I liked, to join any political group I chose, in short, to call my soul my own, was worth the risk.

At that stage in my meditations a recent conversation with a former school friend of mine occurred to me. We had been cadet sergeants in the same company at the Naval College of St. Petersburg when we were youngsters. He was at the time a professed monarchist, always eager to advertise his devotion to the throne and the Imperial Family. When I saw him again a few weeks before leaving Moscow, my friend was in the service of the Red armed forces guarding one of the sectors of the border. We had quite a lengthy discussion on our mutual experiences, and exchanged views on the conditions of life in Soviet Russia. The more my friend listened to me the angrier he became.

"You're your old self, Dimitrii, just as you were at the Naval College. Then you were dissatisfied with the régime and criticized everything under the sun. Now here you are again running down the Government and berating its policies. You're just a rebel by nature, unable to adjust yourself to any political system!"

I tried to point out to him that there was more logic in my position

than in his, but he would have none of it, and left me in high dudgeon.

Am I really a born rebel? Or am I justified in my belief that man has a right to be more than a blind, obedient tool of the State?

The sun was already up and my companions were stirring. We had a hasty breakfast of bread and sausage with a cupful of water from the brook to wash it down.

At first we made straight through the underbrush, following some small blazings that our Finns knew how to interpret. The officer explained to me that we were very close to the sentry line of the Frontier Guards and that it would be risky to walk along paths or roads, as we might run into a patrol. Gradually the underbrush thinned out and disappeared. We walked rapidly across heather-covered ground under sparsely set pinetrees. The order of our march was changed and we were now moving in a line, about one hundred yards apart. We crossed a cart track, jumping so as not to leave any too obvious spoor. Then we suddenly ran into a group of women and children gathering berries in a small bog at the foot of a hillock. They were terrified at the sight of four armed men bearing down on them, and began to scream. We paid no attention to them and continued to move as quickly as we could. Soon we dived into the underbrush again and disappeared from their sight.

The Iudenich officer said to me in a whisper, "These people from the border villages know better than to report to the Frontier Guards that they have seen us. They are fully aware what it means to talk out of turn about such matters."

He also informed me that we were now within half a mile of the Sestra River, which was the border line of Finland.

We were approaching the river by a narrow path between alder bushes when suddenly we saw a large fox sitting on the path in front of us. There had been no hunting in the border districts for a number of years, so that animals were less shy of mankind. We stopped to look at him and one of the Finns aimed his pistol. I had considerable difficulty in persuading him to refrain; I was afraid that a shot so close to the border might bring the patrols upon us.

Meanwhile Master Reynard made off into the bushes, his brush waving at us through the undergrowth like a russet flag. This was the last living thing I saw in Russia.

As we were approaching the river I fully expected that the shore would be heavily guarded, and imagined sentry posts and machine guns, perhaps some barbed wire and the prospect of swimming across the river in broad daylight under the fire of Red soldiers.

To my great astonishment there was no sign of the Frontier Guard at the river's edge and we crossed the Sestra over a fallen tree trunk without even wetting our feet! I could see the river at least half a mile up and down stream and could not detect the slightest sign of the presence of any Red frontiersmen, and not a single shot was fired at us while we crossed. This was one of the greatest surprises of my life. I was all keyed up for the last dash across the border—going over the top, as it were—and here we were, balancing ourselves like adventurous schoolboys on the slippery tree trunk and quietly sitting down under a tree on the other side!

For quite a while I simply could not believe that Soviet Russia was beyond that river. I felt like pinching myself to see if I was dreaming.

After a brief rest we walked to an isolated farm, where we were greeted by friends of the escort. We were given a hearty meal and a chance to dry our damp clothing and shoes. Then I said good-bye to my companions and settled my bill with the two Finns.

In about a couple of hours I was in Terjoki, whither I was driven by the farmer. I walked up to the policeman at an intersection and asked him where the quarantine camp was, as I knew that anyone crossing the border was supposed to spend a fortnight there.

The policeman looked at me in surprise.

"Where are you from?"

"Petrograd."

"Didn't you meet any Frontier Guards on your way to Terjoki?"

I answered in the negative and he took me over to the Commandant's office of the quarantine camp.

My wanderings were over. I was alive, in fair health, practically penniless, shabbily dressed, and facing an entirely new problem: that of surviving in a strange and none too friendly western world.